

NOVEMBER 1, 2025



D57

DISTRICT 57 NEWSLETTER

Toastmasters, District 57, Region 1

Nov 1, 2025

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LinkedIn



Have some news to share?
Please send your articles
(250-600 words) to
Newsletter Editor, Shalini Suravarjula at news@d57tm.org

<https://d57tm.org>

DISTRICT DIRECTOR

GETTING THE LEAD(ER) OUT VERSUS BURYING THE LEDE

By Jeffrey Young

Nov 1, 2025

One of my goals for the year is to find, inspire, and recruit next year's leaders. It's one part delegation, one part dedication, one part determination, and one part deliberation.

All of these things require discussion. Talking to someone rather than sending emails. Giving them a feel for who you are as a leader and also learning who they are as a Next Leader.

In a world where it's very easy to cast a net into the void by putting a flyer up, or posting blindly to social media, we can tell ourselves "it's enough to advertise; surely if you shout loud enough, people will answer the call."

In leadership, one should try to understand the principle of "it's never enough until it's too late to do any more." Deadlines wait for no one, and some of them are immutable.

The longer we wait to tell/remind someone about something, the shorter time frame they have to finish. Eventually someone has to choose between 'good, fast, or cheap.' You can usually only have two out of the three, and most of the time it won't be good.

The key trick here is to communicate early, often, and late as to what upcoming deadlines and appointments and meetings are. Sometimes we think that telling someone something once is enough, especially if they acknowledge hearing it.

But what's important to us is a hectic Tuesday for someone else, and in our quest to be amenable and agreeable we'll say something along the lines of 'Sounds good' and 'I'll be there' – only to forget 10 minutes later.



Leadership Isn't About Titles It's About Talking, Timing, and Taking Initiative.

The more we communicate, the more chances we have of being remembered. The less we communicate, the more we become static in the noise of someone's lives – but to overcommunicate is to become the noise that people are tempted to ignore.

The phrase 'burying the lede' is to fail to emphasize the importance of something within a conversation or article; drowned in a sea of words, it is the thing that someone might not notice, like saying, 'Hey, club member dues are past due, this is bad.' or 'We're looking for more help/articles for the Dispatch and Weekly Digests.'

Sometimes it's just a matter of keeping your requests simple, at the same time you explain what the benefits are to them. Here are my five for October:

- Your unfinished Paths will get tougher after the end of this month. Finish your current level fast or it'll be slower!
- Want to get your wisest Toastmaster words out to more people? Contribute an article and tell people to read! Articles are due before the 20th of the month.

<https://d57tm.org>

PREPARE MORE, GROW MORE



By Dennis Dawson, DTM3, Club Growth Director, PDG

Nov 1, 2025

Last month, an article appeared in this newsletter suggesting that a way to build skills is to give speeches without preparation. Keeping in mind that the articles in this newsletter are written by POTs (plain ol' Toastmasters) and not experts, I suggest taking anything said here with a grain of salt (including my opinions).

A person I like to quote is Ralph Smedley, the Founder of Toastmasters. One of his most famous lines is "The unprepared speaker has a right to be afraid." He knew you overcome fear and gain skills through preparation, practice, and organization.

If you peruse the lessons in Pathways, I know of only one or two that involve extemporaneous speaking. Even those lessons at least give a hint about what the topics might be so that you're not caught completely by surprise.

The backbone of the Pathways program is to give well rehearsed 5-7 minute speeches. Do you want to be a better Table Topics speaker? You build that skill by giving lots of prepared speeches, so that the format of a speech becomes second nature, and you are able to pull from past speeches as needed to add detail to your Table Topic.

People have commented in the past that they admire the way I speak in such a natural, conversational tone. I tell them, and I'll tell you, the way to be relaxed and conversational when delivering a speech is to practice, practice, practice.

I start with an outline. I flesh out the speech and write a complete script. Then, as I rehearse the speech, I ease back to just an outline, and finally deliver it with no notes at all. That usually takes 10-20 runthroughs. Most people could be completely relaxed and natural when they speak, they just don't rehearse as much as more experienced speakers.

I don't just practice until a speech is memorized. I practice until I can blow it, recover, and no one notices. When you see a speaker look up and to the left while they're speaking, it means they've lost their place, and they're trying to remember what comes next. I want to have the speech well ensconced in my neocortex (long-term memory), and be able to retrieve it easily when the time is right. Typically, I've rehearsed so much that actually delivering the speech is a relief, because I'm finally done with it.

Why do I bother to prepare so rigorously? Because I'm not in Toastmasters hoping to hoodwink 10 people at the back of a Denny's. Every time I speak, I'm preparing to speak at a professional conference. I'm preparing to give a TED talk. I'm preparing to energize and inspire my classroom. I don't want to be good at being a Toastmaster, I want to be an effective communicator in all areas of my life. I won't be asked to speak if I'm not prepared when the chance arises.

This is why I say prepare more, in order to grow the skills that actually help you to succeed. The time you put into your Pathways lessons will pay off in the long run. Looking for short cuts or trying to "get around" the requirements of a lesson will only hold you back from becoming the leader and communicator you are meant to be.

BRAND NEW PROSPECTIVE CLUBS

By Daniel Waas

Nov 1, 2025

Creative ideas for starting new clubs

District 57 is entering an exciting new chapter of growth and creativity! We're proud to share that eight brand-new club ideas are currently in development, each one designed to provide fresh opportunities for connection, leadership, and communication. These innovative clubs will explore unique themes, professional niches, and creative concepts that bring together members with shared passions and goals. From specialty interest clubs to concept-driven communities, each idea has the potential to become a thriving part of our district's success story. Together, we're building spaces where Toastmasters can experiment, evolve, and expand their speaking journey like never before.



How are we going to do this?

To bring these new clubs to life, **we'll be hosting regular demo meetings** where guests can experience each club's unique theme, energy, and purpose. These sessions will help potential members understand the value of Toastmasters while allowing us to gather interest and build a strong foundation. Our ultimate goal is to reach the 20-member charter requirement, turning these creative concepts into fully functioning clubs that inspire, connect, and grow leaders across District 57.



We need your help

We can't do this without you! We're calling on members and volunteers to help run demo meetings, mentor new members, and spread the word. Whether you're moderating a session, giving feedback, or inviting guests, your involvement makes a real impact. Every role, every effort counts.

You can learn more about each of the 8 new clubs, and volunteer to support them, by **clicking the link below**. Together, we'll build thriving new clubs that grow leaders and strengthen District 57.

NewClubs D57 SignUp



<https://d57tm.org>

“WOULD YOU PLEASE SHARE OUR FLYER ?”

By Leesa Thompson, DTM, PRM

Nov 1, 2025

A quick overview to help you decide where to post your event flyer

Not long ago, someone came up to me and said, “Leesa, would you please share our flyer?”

It’s a question I hear often — and it’s a great one! District members are doing amazing things and want to spread the word. Whether it’s a training, club special event, open house, or new club launch, there are many ways to share your flyer with the District 57 community. Each channel reaches people a little differently, so here’s a quick overview to help you choose the best options



YouTube

If your event has a video (such as a promo or recap), it can be uploaded to Facebook or directly to the District 57 YouTube channel. Hans, our YouTube Channel Manager, can help you with uploading and sharing your content. This is a great way to reach a wider audience and keep your message engaging and visual. Contact Hans at YouTube@d57tm.org



Monthly Newsletter (Dispatch)

Want your flyer featured in the District 57 Newsletter? Submissions are due by the 20th of the month. Check the current newsletter for content and format guidelines, or contact Shalini at news@d57tm.org if you’re unsure.

<https://d57tm.org/media>



WhatsApp

Another great way to spread the word is through WhatsApp. There are many large Toastmasters-related groups and community chats, each with its own sharing rules, so be sure to check before posting.



District Calendar

Add your event to the district calendar using the Event Submission Form on the website. If you need a hand, Maureen can help, Maureen@d57tm.org



Social Media



- Facebook: You can post directly to the District 57 Facebook Group yourself.
- LinkedIn: Posts here need to be shared by a district admin, you can find their contact information on the LinkedIn page.



Email

You can share your flyer as an email to a targeted audience. Wing, our Mailchimp Manager, can help you craft and send your message effectively. Contact: Wing@d57tm.org



District Website

Your information can also appear as a short blurb on the website. If you’d like to go this route, reach out to Gerlando, webmaster@d57tm.org



District Digest

The District Digest is currently unavailable, but stay tuned for updates on its return!

With all these options, your flyer can reach the right people in the right places. Now, the next time you find yourself asking, “Would you please share our flyer?” you’ll know exactly how to make it happen!

<https://d57tm.org>

PUBLIC RELATIONS



D57

Create, Customize, Communicate The Canva Way!

By Shalini Suravarjjala

Nov 1, 2025

CANVA WORKSHOP



Bring your club promotions to life! Whether you're a beginner or already use Canva, this hands-on workshop will help you design professional flyers and social media posts with ease. Learn how to start from a blank canvas or template, apply design tips and techniques, and create visuals that attract attention.

You'll also explore practical steps for using backgrounds, layering elements, adding text creatively, and resizing designs for print and online sharing. By the end of the session, you'll walk away with a finished Toastmasters flyer and a ready-to-use list of design resources to continue creating confidently!

In today's visual world, strong design skills make your club's message stand out. Don't miss this opportunity to sharpen your creativity, elevate your marketing impact, and communicate the Toastmasters spirit through powerful visuals.



Wednesday
November 19
6–8 PM
Online

All District 57
Toastmasters &
guests are
welcome



Register to RSVP and get the Zoom link:
<https://tinyurl.com/D57CanvaWorkshopRSVP>

<https://d57tm.org>

Capturing Club Joy

By Ed Cullen Past District Director, DTM

Nov 1, 2025

SHOW THE FUN. SHARE THE SPIRIT. GROW YOUR CLUB!

Join District 57 Toastmasters for “Capturing Club Joy,” a fun and practical online workshop designed to help your club earn its Public Relations Incentive – and shine in the spotlight! Learn how to take photos that capture the laughter, learning, and leadership that make your club special.

Discover how to photograph authentic moments that tell your club’s story and attract new members who don’t want to miss out on the Toastmasters experience.

We’ll explore:

- ☛ Now that we’ve got great photos, where do we put them?
- ☛ How can our photos boost visibility and engagement?
- ☛ What makes an image inspire others to join?

Don’t miss this opportunity to celebrate your club’s joy, share its story, and inspire others – one great photo at a time!

“A joyful club is a growing club - let’s show the world what Toastmasters looks like in action!”



Wednesday
December 3

6–8 PM

Online

All District 57
Toastmasters &
guests are
welcome



Register to RSVP and get the Zoom link:

<https://tinyurl.com/D57PhotographyWorkshopRSVP>

<https://d57tm.org>

PUBLIC RELATIONS



D57

PUBLIC RELATIONS INCENTIVES

2025–2026

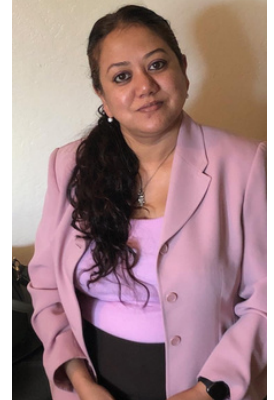
By Somdutta Ray, AD, PR Incentive Chair

Nov 1, 2025

Capture, Create, and Celebrate!

District 57 Toastmasters is filled with creativity, connection, and contagious energy and this year, your club can earn recognition for sharing that spirit! Three Public Relations Incentives give clubs the chance to shine while promoting the joy of Toastmasters.

All incentive details and submission instructions can be found on the D57 Incentive Tracker under Public Relations, or by contacting Somy at PRincentive@d57tm.org



Club Newsletters Share Your Club Story

Create and share three newsletters before April 30, 2026, highlighting your club's achievements, members, and events.

Each newsletter must:

- Be written in English and include club contact information, meeting day/time, and location (with address if in person or hybrid).
- Be shared with Shalini (news@d57tm.org) for possible inclusion in the District newsletter.
- Receive approval from Somy (PRincentive@d57tm.org) to qualify for credit.
- Tip: Space each issue at least two months apart and include photos to make your content shine!

Capture Club Joy Show the Smiles and Spirit!

Take five high-quality photos that capture the fun, learning, and teamwork that define your club. Include the event name, date, location, and member names in each submission.

Share your photos across District social media platforms Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Meetup, the D57 website, Dispatch newsletter, and Nextdoor and send proof to Somy for credit.

Please note: Sharing only within your club newsletter does not qualify.

Photos should reflect club events aligned with the D57 vision, with a variety of members and moments featured.

Short-Form Video Challenge One Minute of Fun!

Capture the energy and engagement of your meetings in a 50–59 second video! Submit your video to Hans (youtube@d57tm.org) for approval, then post it to the D57 Facebook group to earn credit.

Approved videos will be featured on the District 57 YouTube Shorts channel.

Awards are limited to the first 10 clubs or until December 31, 2025, whichever comes first!

Show your club's voice, joy, and creativity — and get recognized for it!

Visit the D57 Incentive Tracker (Public Relations section) or

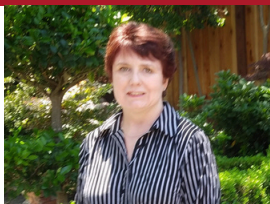
Email Somy at PRincentive@d57tm.org for full details.

<https://d57tm.org>

PUBLIC RELATIONS



DISTRICT 57 SHINES AT THE LAFAYETTE ART & WINE FESTIVAL



By Karrie Keegan

Nov 1, 2025

The Lafayette Art & Wine Festival on September 20–21, 2025 was an incredible weekend of community connection, creativity, and visibility for District 57 Toastmasters. Thousands of residents filled the streets of downtown Lafayette to enjoy local art, wine, food, and music—and our booth stood proudly among them, representing the spirit of growth, confidence, and communication that Toastmasters brings to every community.

Our purpose for tabling at the festival was simple: to increase District 57's visibility and connect face-to-face with neighbors who might benefit from the Toastmasters experience. The energy was contagious—over twenty volunteers showed up throughout the weekend to greet visitors, share personal stories, and explain how Toastmasters helps people find their voice and leadership potential.

The enthusiasm between volunteers and festivalgoers was truly magical. Some people who hadn't signed up stopped by to help, while others apologized for missing the event but promised to join next time. Through these conversations, I learned more about the lives of my fellow Toastmasters than I ever had before—it reminded me how powerful our shared mission really is.



Looking Ahead

This festival proved how effective in-person outreach can be. Daniel, Jasmine, Sue, Somy, and I—fellow members of Sunrise Toastmasters—are already brainstorming new club opportunities within the Walnut Creek business community, which has tremendous potential for growth.

I'm excited to keep this momentum going. The Lafayette Art & Wine Festival wasn't just a single event—it was the beginning of a renewed, community-centered approach to building confidence and leadership throughout District 57.

Post-Festival Progress

Since the event, the follow-up work has been just as exciting. This past month, I sent a thank-you email to all of our volunteers. We also obtained a list of 38 new Toastmasters prospects! I wrote an initial email thanking them for their interest and enthusiasm. One prospect, Danny Idryo, was referred to Brendan Murphy for follow-up, while Steve Taddei received contact information for four prospects he was eager to speak with personally. One contact even expressed interest in starting a Toastmasters club at the Vacaville Prison, and Steve has a call scheduled with another individual hoping to enroll his son in a Youth Leadership program.

Daniel Waas has been instrumental in helping me organize all the data. Together we built a Google Sheet with names and emails for all volunteers and prospects. Daniel is also teaching me how to create a YAMM mail merge, so we can send personalized emails connecting prospects to club officers in their respective cities. We're confident this more targeted outreach will yield better engagement. Once finalized, I'll share the Google Sheet with everyone—perhaps it can become the foundation for a District 57 prospect database.

I also want to thank everyone for funding Goal Achievers' membership in the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce! This membership allows us to attend all Chamber networking events for free, expanding our local outreach opportunities.

<https://d57tm.org>

SPOTLIGHT SEASON

CONTEST CORNER

By Kate Mills

Nov 1, 2025

Contest Dates, Tips, and Winning Insights

- **Schedule your in-person club contest event in January 2026 at least one week before the Area Contest. Don't wait—December and January calendars always fill up.**
- **Let everyone know the date: Club Members, Area Director, and Division Director. Post it in TI Club Central > Club Events, D57 Calendar, and social media.**
- **Look for members to fill key contest positions between October and December: Contestants, Contest Chair, Chief Judge, and Contest Toastmaster.**



The Table Topics Contest has no educational prerequisites. As long as the member belongs to a club good standing and has renewed their dues, they can compete. Even brand new members can compete. However, to compete in the International Speech Contest requires a Level 2 in Pathways or a DTM. Therefore, club VPEs should make sure that any member who wants to compete in the ISC finishes Level 2 before the contest. Consider holding a Speech-a-Thon to help those members finish their remaining Pathways speeches.

If your club has wiggle room for guest speakers, please let Kate Mills, D57 Contest Chair, know the club name, number, meeting date and time, location/hybrid, and who to contact to get on the agenda. You'll fill speaker roles, and contestants get practice with different feedback.

Win-win! katemillstoast@gmail.com

Contests super-charge learning curves for speakers and project managers, as well as teamwork, and guest attraction. If you are a club that typically doesn't hold a contest, maybe this is your year to change things up. We're here to make the experience possible.

<https://d57tm.org>

AH UM AND SO

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON WITH FILLER WORDS

By Lee Vaughan

Nov 1, 2025

Um... No More! Elevate Your Speechcraft Game



There's a lot more to learning speechcraft than eliminating filler words. My own view of speaking is on the lofty side; I believe speechcraft is a type of folk art, and we've only begun to plumb its depths. But first, I've got to address the elephant in the room—"um" isn't child's play anymore. Did you know that "um" has mutated into a more pernicious variant? "Um" was the virus of yesteryear. Now there's the dreaded yet much-tolerated "but um"—a crutch that's supposed to signify a transition from one subject to another. This nasty evolution indicates that filler words are something we'll always wrestle with.

But um, allow me some filler-word detective work. Let's consider the occasion of filler and the conditions that might cause it.

If one uses filler words in everyday speech, they will carry over into a prepared speech or presentation without fail. But why are they used in everyday speech in the first place? Perhaps the answer lies in understanding filler words as social cues. For example, some things "ah" or "um" could be conveying are:

I can't think of my next phrase immediately, but don't interrupt me.

I'm giving serious consideration to your question, so give me some time to gather my thoughts.

I'm trying to start or finish my thoughts, and in a moment, I'll give a signal for you to respond.

I'm not slow; I'm just careful in thought and speech.

And in the case of "but um": I'm done with one line of thought and am signaling a new thought before I begin it.

As messy as these social cues are, I doubt they're going away anytime soon. But how should people who are committed to speechcraft signal these sorts of messages? Here are a couple of ideas.

<https://d57tm.org>

AH UM AND SO

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON WITH FILLER WORDS

By Lee Vaughan

Nov 1, 2025

Practice filler word elimination in everyday life.

Let alone a speaking engagement, practice cleaner speech patterns in everyday situations. The small talk with the neighbor, the ball game recap with your buddy, the chat with the checkout clerk—are friends and acquaintances going to ostracize you for your lack of “um”? Will they consider themselves more or less enlightened than you because they say “but um” and you don’t? I bet not.

Practice in these situations pays off. Although I’m not totally immune to the Ah/Um virus, it tends to affect me much less than many of my peers. And because I’m inoculated against Ah/Um, I am totally clean of that new strain, But Um. Try everyday practice twice a day and call me in the morning.



Recognize a speaking engagement as a temporary social shift.

If you’re scheduled to speak in Toastmasters, at work, at a volunteer event, or at a paid gig, you’ve been given the floor. Even in the most informal speaking engagements, things have changed for you once you’re “up there.” You have now been granted a different role than just a moment before. Seconds ago, you were expected to wait your turn, raise your hand, and let another person talk first. Now, you’re THE SPEAKER. You have the audience’s attention, and the audience is usually not supposed to interrupt you.

Then why do we use filler words when we’re “up there”? Could it be because our minds haven’t accepted the change in our position? Yes, I think we are falling back on social cues that are not relevant at the moment.

Rather than fill your speech with non-meaning, try using real words to state clearly—rather than signal with nonsense—that you are thinking of your next words:

You: “What’s the word I want?”

Audience: “Extemporaneous!”

Or if there’s more to think about than a single word you’re searching for, practice your comfort with pausing. I mean, really practice this over and over again.

These approaches are better social cues than filler words. They signal your spontaneity to the audience, showing that you’re actually thinking with them and not in autopilot mode, and thus they could help with audience engagement. Asking the audience for input is a better social cue because it leaves no doubt as to what you’re inviting the audience to do—to think with you. And pausing allows the audience to catch up with the speaker and then look forward to what comes next.

‘But um’ is just as unnecessary as other filler words.

This one might appear tough to avoid because it seems to have gained traction in social settings. To address this, I hope it won’t sound too schoolmarmish to say, “Use your words!” What is wrong with something like, “But now I’d like to consider [a second point],” or “What about [X subtopic]?” The “But Um” virus can be killed rather easily, despite its infectiousness.

Avoiding filler words takes everyday practice, but it also requires recognition of where one is at the moment. As the speaker, the show is yours. It’s your party, and you’ll use real words if you want to. Pausing, transitioning with intention, or even asking the audience for help in clarifying your point could help you eliminate filler and level up your game in the process.

PATHWAYS SUPPORT GROUP



PATHWAYS HELP

By Susan Thompson

Nov 1, 2025

Do you need help:

Picking a path?

Navigating Pathways?

Identifying a project that will be appropriate for a speech you want to deliver?

Making Pathways work for you?

Or would you like to share your insights on Pathways and Toastmasters?

Please join us if you need help with Pathways or would like to offer help to others. We provide individual or small group breakout rooms to offer hands-on assistance.



**Wednesday
November 12, 2025
6:00 pm PST**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/YPKcMgrhR2GHy8sG49Ur8g>

**Monday
November 24, 2025
6:00 pm PST**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/bT8KuZ8SRcyIGzZBDIGH5g>

**Wednesday
December 12, 2025
6:00 pm PST**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/YPKcMgrhR2GHy8sG49Ur8g>

<https://d57tm.org>