

JANUARY 1, 2026



DISTRICT 57 NEWSLETTER

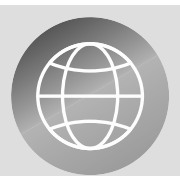
Toastmasters, District 57, Region 1

Jan 1, 2026

1. [Happy New Year from District 57](#)
2. [District Director - Is your club being paid to speak?](#)
3. [PR Momentum and What's next for D57](#)
4. [The Chair, the Quilt, and the Speaker](#)
5. [Contest Corner](#)
6. [Makeup TLI Training](#)
7. [Awards and DTM Inspiration Night](#)
8. [Table Topics with Mas Mahathir at Island Toastmasters Open House](#)
9. [Oakland 88 Toastmasters Open House](#)
10. [Storytelling Speciality Club Charter](#)



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

<https://d57tm.org>

DISTRICT 57



D57

HAPPY NEW YEAR, DISTRICT 57!

By District 57

Jan 1, 2026

2026



<https://youtube.com/shorts/EDFvwhl5Sx4?si=oEt7McUJLCGq-CEW>

As we step into a brand-new year, Toastmasters District 57 extends warm wishes for a Happy New Year filled with growth, purpose, and possibility. May 2026 be a year where you strengthen your communication and leadership skills, support one another, and create positive, lasting impact in your clubs and communities. Together, we continue our mission of empowering individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Thank you for your dedication, service, and commitment to excellence. Here's to a year of confident voices, meaningful connections, and shared success ahead.

District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

Club Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

<https://d57tm.org>

IS YOUR CLUB BEING PAID TO SPEAK?

By Jeffrey Young

Jan 1, 2026

**For most of the clubs in District 57,
the answer is 'Yes'.**



**Were you aware that we're giving your club money
for doing Toastmasters things?**

Eighty-nine percent of the clubs in the District have earned at least \$20 in District Bucks that can be spent on an approved list of expenses.

So far, we've awarded over five thousand dollars in incentives, and very few clubs have spent their allotment. It's part of the way Toastmasters International incentivizes clubs to do things that help their members, in that a portion of your bi-annual dues is sent back to the District to help pay for running the District and we're passing some of that money back to clubs who are following the Toastmasters educational programs.

IS YOUR CLUB BEING PAID TO SPEAK?

By Jeffrey Young

Jan 1, 2026

Were you aware that we're giving your club money for doing Toastmasters things?



Q: How do you earn District Bucks? Do I have to file anything?

For most of the awards, it's 'automatic' (as in, 'when I get to it')

Roughly once a week, I look at the Dashboard and see how many Distinguished Club Points (DCP) your club has, and then whether you've gone slightly above and beyond. The following things award District Bucks:

- 5 Level 1 Path Awards
- 3 Level 2 Path Awards
- 6 or more Level 2 Awards
- 3 Level 3 Path Awards
- 2 Level 4/5/DTM Awards
- 4 or more 4/5/DTM Awards
- 5 New Members
- 10 Total New Members
- 7/7 Officers Trained (August/February)
- +3 Year over Year Members (from your starting Base membership as of July 1, 2025).
- Early Renewals (February 15th, 2026) for April 1

The following awards will need to be manually filed using the Incentive Tracker:

- Any of the Public Relations awards
- Creating and running a non-Toastmasters approved Special Community Event

There's also one combo award for the clubs who are overachievers:

- Earn 5 DCP points
- Completed your Club Success Plan before September 30th, 2025
- Complete a Moments of Truth (easy if you have someone working on their Path's Level 5 requirements)\

We extended the deadline for this one past December 31, 2025 to accommodate the increased requirements to finish levels to February 28th, 2026. The first 13 clubs to file for this award get \$75; additional clubs earn \$50. Congratulations go to Andesheeh, City Speech, and Cre-Art for already earning their \$75! (They count among the 13 clubs, so there are 10 full awards left at the time of this writing.)

IS YOUR CLUB BEING PAID TO SPEAK?

By Jeffrey Young

Jan 1, 2026

Were you aware that we're giving your club money for doing Toastmasters things?



Q: What can you do with your District Bucks?

The best place to spend your District Bucks is at the Toastmasters store; you can also use it for things that directly benefit your club, like supplies, equipment, software, Zoom accounts, and similar things.

You cannot use it to pay for membership dues, buy Paths for members, or tickets to the Conference, and you cannot use it to pay speakers or buy gift cards, since this is against what makes Toastmasters a non-profit organization.

Q: How do we use District Bucks out of our account?

1. Get a Concur account for your club. (We're trying to find alternatives for the clubs that can't have bank accounts.)
2. Purchase items and save your receipts.
3. Apply via Concur for a reimbursement within 30 days of your purchase and before April 30th.

Your club bank account should have approved purchases reimbursed within roughly two weeks of your filing.

Q: What happens if something costs more than we have?

You'll get a partial reimbursement, up to your current District Bucks account credited back based on the receipt you file, so it's up to you to maximize how you make purchases.

If you have further questions, as always, feel free to drop me a line at jeffrey@d57tm.org.

SPOTLIGHT ON PROGRESS



D57

PR Momentum & What's Next for District 57

By Leesa Thompson

Jan 1, 2026

December has been an especially active and meaningful month for our PR Team as we continue supporting District 57 through an important period of transition. Our team has been working closely with Districts 4, 33, and 39 as we move toward realignment. This has involved significant coordination and collaboration as four districts prepare to merge into two new districts -District 205 and District 206.



Website development for Districts 205 and 206 is just beginning and represents an important foundational step in this transition. We are hopeful that both sites will be ready for a preview at District 57's final Annual Conference in May. We are deeply grateful to our webmaster, Gerlando, whose expertise and dedication are guiding this early and critical phase of development.



We also extend heartfelt thanks to Shalini for her outstanding contributions to our recent newsletter issues. In addition, her leadership in organizing PR workshops—especially those designed for our VP PR Ambassadors—has helped strengthen skills, alignment, and confidence across our clubs.



Our appreciation also goes to Somy for her leadership in outside marketing as we finalize a comprehensive six-month marketing plan. We are increasing efforts to boost Facebook ads for club open houses and special events, and we are preparing to launch radio advertising and interview opportunities from mid-February through mid-May to expand our reach within local communities. Special thanks to Derrick for enhancing flyers and managing boosted Facebook ads that are helping clubs increase visibility and attendance.



If your club is hosting an event featuring a major speaker who would be a strong draw for the local community, please notify the PR Team as early as possible so we can help boost your event. We are also seeking members interested in being interviewed as part of our upcoming radio campaign. As part of our PR incentives update, we are excited to share that six short-form videos have already been produced. To encourage continued participation, we are extending the PR video incentive until 10 videos have been submitted. Please continue working on club newsletters and sharing your captured club joy—through stories, photos, and videos—across our various platforms.



FINALLY, THANK YOU TO OUR ENTIRE PR TEAM FOR WORKING COLLABORATIVELY AND WITH SUCH COMMITMENT TO HIGHLIGHTING THE ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSES OF DISTRICT 57. SPECIAL THANKS TO HANS FOR HIS ONGOING SUPPORT, CREATIVITY, AND LEADERSHIP. THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR MORE PR HELP, AND PARTICIPATION ON THE PR TEAM CAN COUNT TOWARD COMPLETING DTM AND HPL PROJECTS.



THE PR TEAM MEETS EVERY OTHER FRIDAY AT NOON (PT) ON ZOOM, AND ALL ARE WELCOME. THE MORE EACH OF YOU CONTINUES TO ILLUMINATE YOUR CLUBS, THE BRIGHTER DISTRICT 57 WILL SHINE DURING THE FINAL SIX MONTHS OF OUR DISTRICT. TOGETHER, WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG AND LASTING LEGACY.

<https://d57tm.org>

The Chair, the Quilt, and the Speaker

By Lee Vaughan

Jan 1, 2026

My views on speaking have undergone some development. Having been a Toastmaster for a little while now, and having spoken at other events, I've observed something about my growth as a speaker I find noteworthy. To relay this to you, the best I can do is to consider the nature of folk art.

Your grandfather may have crafted a set of ornate wooden chairs with his own elaborately carved patterns, or Grandma may have stitched a beautiful quilt by hand using a pattern she designed. Although chairs are for sitting in and quilts are for warmth, personal and painstaking attention to their craft elevates these things from objects to something else. Unlike fine art, which includes pieces meant to be experienced for their own sake – a painting, a ballet, a concerto – folk art takes a utilitarian object and adds artistic flair, the craft and the commonplace, the pleasing and the practical.

Of course, the purpose of speaking is to relay a message of some kind, but as I think we'd all agree, the effectiveness of a speech or story lies in the rendering. It seems to me that like Grandma and Grandpa's chair and quilt, good speaking marries an everyday purpose with artistic execution. In other words, I think of good speaking as a type of folk art.

When I view my own speaking experience through this lens, some things start to add up for me; any speaking engagement becomes an opportunity for self-expression, no matter how small. Recently I gave a speech for my son's high school graduation ceremony held in my own home, with only family present, and it happened to be a personal best. Graduation speeches are standard procedure – obligatory, you might say – but just like Grandpa's heirloom furniture, my talk went beyond the everyday for the audience.

My living room hardly constitutes public speaking, and only my local greasy spoon is a humbler venue. But I'm increasingly realizing how a small audience and intimate venue can encourage speakers to personalize their work, to celebrate their own human condition, and thus earn a deeper connection with people through the medium of speaking.

The Chair, the Quilt, and the Speaker

By Lee Vaughan

Jan 1, 2026

Writing 2,000 years ago in his Discourses, Roman philosopher Epictetus called public speaking an “exquisite art.” There’s no arguing with that, but the common man and woman nowadays are less likely to have an audience in an amphitheater. Instead, we have other platforms, including Toastmasters, to hone our craft before we present on different stages.

In her video series *The Art of Storytelling: From Parents to Professionals*, Professor Hannah B. Harvey’s first lesson included a story she told about her eccentric aunt. Although masterfully told, what struck me wasn’t just her skills as a storyteller; rather, she showed the viewer how to tell a moving story by filming it before a small studio audience. Why did she make this choice and not just speak to the camera? She wanted to show the viewer how a speaker can leave their own imprint on an audience with a personal and relatable experience.

To me, one of the best things to leverage within smaller frames like this is what I might call “folksiness,” the ornaments and personal touches that make the speech or story uniquely one’s own. Instead of summarizing how a transformative event impacted me, I can work on more personalized narration to put the audience there with me at the scene.

When preparing a talk that includes a retelling of personal experiences, and most of my talks do, I now find myself asking these types of questions:

- What do I remember that was visually striking about my experience?
- What exactly did someone say to me that stuck with me all this time?
- What was it that made me want to laugh, cry, fight, or flee, and how can I convey it in my own way?

Perhaps these more personalized ingredients are what makes a talk more like Grandpa’s chair or Grandma’s quilt and less like an IKEA special or discounted Walmart houseware. Both types of household items serve their purpose, but only one is worth preserving, treasuring, and passing down.

Contest Corner

By Kate Mills

Jan 1, 2026

CONTEST PREPARATION AND PLANNING



Hello Contest Officials, and Officers that have *almost* appointed Contest Chairs! Contest Season is underway.

Timeline

- January - February: Club Contests must be completed at least one week before the Area Contest.
- February - March: Area Contests must be completed at least one week before the Division Contest.
- March - April: Division Contests must be completed by the end of April 2026.

Club and Area Officers - Let's Get Busy

- Appoint your Contest Chair, Contest Toastmaster, and Chief Judge.
- Schedule your Club and Area Contest and share the dates.
- Select your venue.
- Both the International Speech and Table Contests are intended to be in-person contests. Only Club Contests can be hybrid.
- Make sure your event gets published on the District 57 Calendar [57 Calendar](#) using this link: [Submit an Event on the D57 Calendar](#) Be sure to include a contact name and email, and state that you would appreciate volunteers that can fill contest roles.
- Advertise your contest event.
- Talk up the contest with club members, encouraging them to enter competition.
 - Table Topics Contest - Must be a paid member of a club in good standing (8+ members). There are no educational requirements.
 - International Speech Contest - Must be a paid member of a club in good standing AND have completed Pathways Levels 1 & 2, or be a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM).
- Club, Area, and Division Officers -- don't be strangers to each other. Fill each other's contest roles and share venues if available.

Contest Corner

By Kate Mills

Jan 1, 2026

CONTEST TRAINING UPDATE



Training

Let's build contest confidence and get your questions answered. You can also send questions to katemillstoast@gmail.com

OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS, WE HELD SEVERAL CONTEST TRAININGS. THE TOPICS INCLUDED CONTEST PLANNING, CONTEST JUDGING, VOLUNTEER RECRUITING, BRIEFINGS, CHECKLISTS, AND SCRIPTS.

IF YOU MISSED THESE SESSIONS, PLEASE REACH OUT TO KATE MILLS, D57 CONTEST CHAIR, TO ARRANGE A CONSULTATION. [KATEMILLSTOAST@GMAIL.COM](mailto:katemillstoast@gmail.com), 510-552-3656"

DISTRICT 57 TLI



POWER UP YOUR LEADERSHIP!

By District 57

Jan 1, 2026

Missed Winter TLI in December? We've Got You Covered!

If you were unable to attend the Winter TLI training in December, don't worry - District 57 is offering multiple Makeup TLI training opportunities to support you. These sessions will be held five times across January and February, giving club officers and members the flexibility to choose a date that works best for their schedule.



Attend on any one of these days

Sunday, 1/18/26 7AM - 9 AM
Friday, 1/23/26 6PM - 8PM
Sunday, 2/8/26 7AM - 9AM
Friday, 2/13/26 7PM - 9PM
Saturday, 2/28/26 7AM - 9AM
Saturday, 2/28/26 7PM - 9PM

These Makeup TLI sessions provide the same high-value leadership training needed to strengthen your skills, support your club, and meet officer training requirements. Whether work, travel, or family commitments kept you from attending in December, this is your chance to stay on track and continue your leadership journey.

Take advantage of these additional opportunities to learn, grow, and lead with confidence. Your club and your future leadership self will thank you.

Mark your calendars, spread the word, and get ready to power up your leadership with District 57!

Who Should Attend?

- All club officers serving through 6/30/26
Attendance is required for Distinguished Club Program credit
- Aspiring club officers
- Members who want to grow their leadership, communication, and confidence
- Anyone looking to be inspired and connected

Invest four hours in yourself and your club will feel the impact all year long. District 57 TLI is more than training. It is motivation, momentum, and mentorship wrapped into one energizing experience.

Register: <https://forms.gle/2a7L9RKwXmFUiz5v9>



Open to ALL Toastmasters

<https://d57tm.org>

Awards & DTM

By George Marshall, DTM

Jan 1, 2026



DISTRICT 57 TOASTMASTERS AWARDS & DTM INSPIRATION NIGHT

Ready to rise higher in your leadership and communication journey?

Whether you are just starting your Pathways adventure or aiming for your Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM), this special event will guide you through the process, celebrate your peers, and spark your next milestone.

- ✦ Learn the DTM requirements and process
- ✦ Celebrate outstanding member and club achievements

Your next level begins with one choice – showing up.

SHOW
UP



REGISTER

Let's learn, celebrate, and grow together District 57!



Thursday
Jan 15
6–7:30 PM
Online

All District 57
Toastmasters &
guests are
welcome



Register to RSVP and get the Zoom link:
<https://tinyurl.com/D57DTMandAwardsRSVP>

<https://d57tm.org>

Mastering Impromptu Speaking

By Liubov Ananeva

Jan 1, 2026

“ONE QUESTION, A MILLION ANSWERS MASTERING IMPROMPTU SPEAKING”

Island City Toastmasters (D57) successfully hosted an engaging Open House on Monday, January 5, 2026 the session focused on helping members and guests strengthen one of the most valuable Toastmasters skills - Table Topics and impromptu speaking.

The event featured guest speaker Mas Mahathir, Public Speaking Coach, Corporate Trainer, and 2nd Place Winner, WCPS 2025. Mas delivered an engaging, practical, and confidence-boosting session that truly brought Table Topics to life. He generously shared powerful, easy-to-remember frameworks that attendees could apply immediately, including CASA (Catch-(Dis)Agreement-Story-Action), ART (Absorb-Repeat-Throw), and CALM (Call for discussion- Access your material-List out-Move on). These tools helped participants find clarity in the moment, organize their thoughts quickly, and respond with confidence even when speaking without preparation.

Through relatable examples and interactive moments, the session demonstrated how mastering Table Topics can reduce anxiety, improve presence, and build confidence not only in Toastmasters meetings, but also in interviews, leadership conversations, and everyday communication.

If you missed the live session or would like to revisit the valuable insights shared, the full recording is now available on the District 57 YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6yn9zAij0c>

<https://d57tm.org>



A heartfelt thank-you to all our guests for showing up with curiosity and courage. Your participation made the evening interactive, energetic, and fun.

Special appreciation goes to the Toastmasters District 57 team, including Jeffrey Young, Leesa Thompson, Hans Toma, and Derrick Ho, for actively promoting the event and helping fill the virtual room. Their support played a key role in the event's success.



Oakland 88 Open House

By Steve Tadei

Jan 1, 2026

OPEN HOUSE



Oakland 88

TOASTMASTERS

District 57

Area: 03 | Division: D

Club No: 88



From
Fear

to

AUTHENTIC
VOICE

How Positive
Intelligence Changed
My Speaking

When:

Monday, Jan 12, 2026
7 to 8 am (PST)

Location:

Kaiser Medical Center
Conference room LL-C
(@MacArthur)

3600 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94611

RSVP WITH STEVE:

staddei57@gmail.com

(510) 506-3028

PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER
DR. MICHELLE PETICOLAS, DTM
SOCIOLOGIST / FILMMAKER / LIFE COACH



To attend Virtually on Zoom, contact Steve:
staddei57@gmail.com / (510) 506-3028



<https://d57tm.org>

NEW CLUBS



D57

Charter New Club A Storytelling Focused Speciality Club

By Daniel Waas

Jan 1, 2026

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

Since
1924

WE ARE TRYING TO CHARTER

We're a specialty Toastmasters club dedicated to unlocking your inner narrator and helping you share stories that truly connect. Through guided practice, feedback, and creativity, we turn ideas into meaningful narratives.

We invite you to join us at one of our demo meetings to experience the magic firsthand.



Every 1st and 3rd Saturday
From 6PM to 7.30PM
UTC -8/Pacific Time
Starting Jan 31st 2026

 **Onceuponaspeech Tmc**
 **onceuponaspeech_tmc**
 **onceuponaspechtmc@gmail.com**

Register by scanning the QR code and step into a space where stories come alive.



Once Upon a Speech

A Storytelling Focused Specialty Club

<https://d57tm.org>