



DIPLOMATIC DISPATCH

A publication of Diplomatic Toastmasters, Evanston, Illinois District 30, Club 4378

Building Bridges Through Communication

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We Have a Winner!



Diplomatic Secretary, Terri Heath, CL with Bruce Burrow, District 30 Governor after winning first place at the District 30 Evaluation Contest last fall

President's Message

I consider joining Toastmasters in general, and Diplomatic Toastmasters specifically, as one of the best things I have ever done for myself. I have not only enjoyed getting to meet a great and diverse group of people, but I have greatly improved my speaking skills. For the last seven months I have had the privilege of serving the club as President.

As we get closer each day to the end of this fiscal year, I realize with pride what a great club we have. Our club has a great record for members excelling at achieving their speaking goals. Our meetings are always full of energy. We continue to have members who compete at the Area, Division, and District levels. In fact, just last fall, our own Terri Heath, CL won in the District Evaluation Contest! Rhonda K. Craven is very involved as North Division Governor and a member of two clubs. We have also been privileged to have new members who get involved in the club right from the start.

If anyone I meet is interested in Toastmasters, I always have a lot to say. I explain to them that "practice, practice, practice" really helps you to improve and that it's productive to put yourself in the presence of other people who are also working to improve their skills. I encourage them to attend learning seminars and events whenever possible and to help others who are seeking to learn. Toastmasters allows every member an opportunity to do all these things, and in a positive, supporting environment. What more could you want?

In the three short years I have been involved with Diplomatic, I have watched many of those before me move into higher positions within Toastmasters and watched many newer members take on bigger challenges. Both have been great learning experiences for me. Now, I realize that anything is possible if you put some work behind it. My hope is that Diplomatic Toastmasters will continue to provide opportunities for learning, improving, leading, and speaking, for many days to come.

Tamara J. Lewis, CL
President

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Message from our Division Governor

When I first joined Diplomatic, I never aspired to serving outside the club, but I'm so glad that I have done so over the past seven years! It's given me a greater appreciation of our club's strengths, which have led to our consistent minimum Distinguished Club performance every year. Some clubs have never been Distinguished during their history, and unfortunately, many clubs don't make it past the first three years. Diplomatic, however, is celebrating its 15th anniversary this month!

I've served as the District Sergeant-at-Arms, two terms as an Area Governor and was in two unofficial (non-voting) positions—Assistant Division Governor and M.O.T.I.V.E.—last year. When I was asked to consider running for Division Governor, I said yes, feeling better equipped than five years ago when I was first asked!

Pam Melick, our Division Governor from 2003-2005 (and a visitor to Diplomatic last summer), left me some big shoes to fill! She took the North Division from no distinction to President's Distinguished both years! Last year, the Division also was first to schedule all its speech contests, have all its dues paid, have all its officer lists submitted on time, and had the highest percentage of clubs with four or more officers trained in both summer and winter!

I'm very proud of our team of six Area Governors! Because of their efforts, the North Division was first to schedule all its spring speech contests. Last summer, we exceeded last year's 65% of 4+ officers, training 83%—a District 30 record! We were also first to have all of our club dues paid and club visits completed so the District can keep its finger on the pulse of the clubs. This group keeps me

well-posted on what is happening in our 29 clubs. We also have two leads to start new clubs, so we anticipate adding to our ranks before June 30!

All this is truly the result of teamwork! Our team picked as its motto, North Shining Stars—Showing the Way. To date, we are truly living this out! I appreciate the groundwork that Pam laid and the chance to learn so much from her! To date, the District leadership (the "Top 3") has selected me as Division Governor of the first two quarters. I've decided to run for the position again for 2006-2007. The club I'm co-coaching (with one of our "ghost members," Dawne Simmons-Archie) is also doing well.

The North Division has great momentum as we are coming to the end of this year. I truly believe we will be able to "three-peat" with the President's Distinguished Division recognition. I hope that Diplomatic will be able to reach that pinnacle with us!

Rhonda K. Craven, ATMS/CL
North Division Governor
District 30 Toastmasters



Editor's Note:

Rhonda was voted Division Governor of the Quarter for the first 2 quarters of her term. Congratulations Rhonda!

Affirmation Corner

Submitted by Adrienne C. Smith

Whatever you ardently desire, sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon, will inevitable come to past.

Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics

Where's the Toastmaster?

Peter Merkle

Peter Merkle, CTM has been absent at meetings recently due to the work demands of his DJ business. He just got back from Mobile Beat Conference where his Chicago ADJA Chapter won Chapter Of The Year and Peter was awarded the Peter Merry Leadership Award! Congratulations Peter and we've missed you!

Habits

Rajesh R. Chotalia

People confuse what makes some people successful. They see the successful among us as very disciplined people. I started seeing it differently when I was exposed to a new concept by Dan Sullivan the founder of Strategic Coach.

Discipline has a negative image to it, but habits have a more positive image. If you look at it we are all "100% disciplined"! But we can change our habits.

Habits are formed by constant repetition of an act consciously. As when we were driving for first time we were very conscious about driving in the initial stage, but now we drive and talk and drink coffee and so on. We don't even think about it, same thing with habits. We form bad habits in the same way as we form good habits.

Too many people make the mistake of changing a lot of habits at the same time. Our mind cannot take that much overload and so, people quit trying. Focusing on one habit at a time for 21 days does work and we can add one good habit at a time, every 21 days. You can call it the 21 day Positive Habit Program. Imagine, in a year, what 12-14 good habits can do to your life.

As an example, I focused on the habits of positive self talk every morning and at bed time for 21 days and now it is a part of my life. I am on my third day of another new habit, called 21 days of positive focus. What I do is before going to bed every night I will think of five positive things that happened to me that DAY and also write them down. WHY? After writing down my positive achievements, I ask myself why I consider it to be positive. I ask myself what further progress can I make and what action steps can I take to move forward.

We fail because of our habits and yet, the good news is, we succeed because of our good habits.

Why Set Speech Goals?

Shari M. Woods, CL, VP of Education

You might be asking yourself this question every time that pesky VP of Education asks you what your speech goal is for the year. It is important to set a speech goal when you join Toastmasters. There are several reasons why. This first reason is to improve our speaking ability, that's usually why we joined Toastmasters. If we set a speech goal we have something to shoot for. It makes us challenge ourselves to make sure we reach our goal. When people join Toastmasters we ask everyone to set a goal. Some people want to complete their CTM and others want to aim for getting half way, before the fiscal year comes to a close.

The second reason setting a goal is important, is longevity. When people set goals they tend to stay with the club longer, because they are serious about becoming a better speaker. Last, but certainly not least, is the third reason. Each member's goal will help the club achieve its goal for the fiscal year, and to become a Distinguished club. Several of the club goals, which must be met in order for the club to be recognized as a Distinguished club, depend on members completing speech goals.

We have several members that have set a goal to complete their CTM, ATM or CL this year. When they complete these goals it will put us that much closer to becoming a Distinguished club for the 2005/2006 fiscal year. Diplomatic Toastmasters has a long tradition of being a Distinguished club. If you look at our banner that hangs on the lectern during each meeting, you will notice it is filled with ribbons that were achieved by the club. Our banner represents members setting their speech goals and achieving them. If you have not yet set a goal for yourself this year, please contact me and we will discuss a plan for you to set and achieve your speaking goal.

Shari can be reached at shari.m.woods@kcc.com

Happy Birthday

This month, March, marks the 15th anniversary of Diplomatic Toastmasters. If you are not familiar with Diplomatic's history, check out the club's history link on our web page at www.geocities.com/diplomatictm. Our club has a history of great members and high honors.



We will be celebrating Diplomatic's anniversary and its achievements on June 4th. Of course, Diplomatic's achievements are its members' achievements. Keep in mind, it takes effort to throw a party and this one is no exception. The Executive Committee has done some planning, but there is still much to be done. Please volunteer to help. We will need people to work on the invitation list, invitations, flyer, public relations, ticket sales, and decorating. Everyone has busy schedules, but even if you only have an extra hour, there are tasks to be done. Let's make it the best party in Diplomatic's history!

Welcome New Members

Adrienne Smith (2/06)
 Rajesh Chotalia (2/06)
 Parvez AdilKhan (2/06)
 LaShawn Blair (1/06)
 Lester Blair (1/06)
 Uday Rao (12/05)
 Mark Pendergrass (10/05)
 Taylan Ilhan (10/05)

Meet the Toastmaster

Mark Pendergrass

What was your primary reason for joining Toastmasters?

To lose my fear of speaking in front of people once and for all. To master thinking on my feet (and stop fumbling through my thoughts and words, thus sounding like I don't know what I'm talking about). To increase and improve my self-confidence and self-esteem.

How did you first hear about Toastmasters?

A sales book by Tom Hopkins.

Where are you from originally?

A small town near Nashville, Tennessee.

What brought you to the Chicago area?

My wife and I got married in November of 1998 and moved to Chicago for the heck of it in January 1999. We both wanted to move to a huge city, and we liked Chicago from previous visits. There was a blizzard right after we moved though, which made me wonder if moving here was such a good idea. Coming from the South, I wasn't accustomed to such cold weather.

What is your occupation currently?

I sell Auto, Home, Individual Health and Life Insurance for State Farm. Those are my specialties.

Tell us a little about your family.

My wife Misti and I have been married for over seven years. We have a little girl, Lulu, three years

old, and a baby boy, Elliott, born November 30, 2005. We round that out with Mavis, my Boston terrier, and Lulu's goldfish named Bot.

Tell us about your icebreaker speech.

The title was "Where I'm Coming From, Where I'm At, and Where I'm Going." I was nervous, but I did well. I practiced several times and had my notes handy. I also made everyone aware that I wanted to reach my CTM by the end of May or June, so I'm accountable to the club. I've got to do it, and I will!

What is the biggest personal benefit you've seen so far, from your Toastmaster experience?

I feel more confident when I talk to people, and my self esteem has seen a boost because of it. A direct result from continually getting up in front of people to speak.

Taylan Ilhan

What was your primary reason for joining Toastmasters?

I felt that I had problems with expressing my thoughts and feelings. I was thinking for a long time to join a Toastmaster club to help me in organizing my ideas better and present them with confidence.

How did you first hear about Toastmasters?

The "Toastmaster" word was introduced to my vocabulary by a close friend. We were talking about how to improve our speaking skills and he suggested I join "Toastmasters". First, I thought that it was a culinary society! However, I quickly realized the "toast" of the Toastmasters was not the one I eat at breakfast. In a few other occasions, it was suggested I join Toastmasters and finally, after many months, I decided to look for a club. Luckily, Evanston had a very nice club and I joined them.

Where are you from originally?

I am from Ankara, Turkey.

What brought you to the Chicago area?

I came to Chicago for my education.

What is your occupation currently?

I am a Ph.D. student at the Department of Industrial Engineering at Northwestern University.

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Taylan Ilhan continued from page 4

Tell us a little about your family.

I have 2 brothers and 1 sister and they are ten to fifteen years older than me. My sister is a Veterinarian, my elder brother is an entrepreneur businessman and my eldest brother is an Anesthetist. My father used to be an officer in the army but it was very long time ago. Although my parents are retired I cannot say so since they take care of their grandchildren all the time. During the last decade, they gave daycare to my niece and nephews, and I have seven of them, so they were very busy.

Tell us about your icebreaker speech.

My speech title was "Having Five Parents". It was about the advantages and disadvantages of 5 grownups at home during my childhood. It was a great experience. I am a little bit shy about talking in a motivating manner but I felt better and relaxed in front of our club members. This helped me very much and I believed I performed very well because of the positive energy I got from them.

What is the biggest personal benefit you've seen so far, from your Toastmaster experience?

First, I learned some basic "rules" of giving a good speech. This helped me to identify my weaknesses. Moreover, I became a more critical listener. After a few meetings, you start to realize that very famous people or even politicians break some basic rules of a clear speech. This motivates you even more because you know that you have similar problems and you are one step ahead of them by being a member of Toastmasters! Second, I had an opportunity to know some local people in town. Being a graduate student in an engineering school puts you in a very international environment. Toastmasters helped me to break the "international" isolation.



2005 Fall Conference

The District 30, 2005 Fall Conference "Proud to be a Toastmaster" was held on November 11 -12 at the Holiday Inn in Glen Ellyn. On Friday evening, Diplomatic member and Secretary Terri Heath, CL competed in the Evaluation Contest, winning first place.



Saturday morning began with the Achiever's Breakfast, with the Banner Parade following. Didn't our own Rhonda K. Craven, ATMS/CL look like a Dr. Seuss character carrying the North Division banner?



After the opening keynote was the business meeting, where Rhonda K. Craven was awarded District Governor for the first quarter. After lunch was served, our own Peter Merkle, CTM proudly accepted Diplomatic's certificate for Select Distinguished. Pam Melick, our immediate past North District Governor 2004 - 2005, was also awarded for her achievements. The afternoon was full, with many learning sessions offered. Overall, a full day and a full conference.

I'm looking forward to the District 30 Spring Conference and hearing Toastmasters International President, Dr. Dilip Abayasekara, DTM, speak as the guest of honor.

Upcoming Events

March 6th

Club International and Table Topics Contest, 7:30 p.m., 1717 Benson St., Evanston (7:00 p.m. briefings for participants)

March 20th

Visit from Dorothy Jurs, ATM/B our Area Governor and Theme Meeting - Movies, Movies, Movies

March 31

Deadline for Early Bird Spring Conference Registrations

April 3

Area International and Table Topics Contest, 6 p.m., Morton Grove Public Library; 6140 Lincoln Ave.; Morton Grove

April 10

North Division International and Table Topics Contest, 6 p.m., Northbrook Library Auditorium, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL

April 30

District 30 Spring Membership Contest ends

May 5 - 6

District 30 Spring Conference, District 30 Table Topics & International Contests, Sheraton Suites at 121 NW Point Boulevard in Elk Grove Village

June 4

Diplomatic Toastmasters Anniversary Dinner, location to be announced very soon!

2005 - 2006 Club Officers

Have a great idea to share?

Submit it to the Diplomatic Dispatch.
Deadline for next issue is Friday, May
19th. Limit articles to 250 words.
Email entries to Tami Lewis at
tamarajlewis@sbcglobal.net.

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Meetings: Monday at 7:30 - 9:00 pm

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