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District 45 - Reflections



Sharon Joseph, DTM
District Director

As the 2024-2025 Toastmaster year comes to an end, there is much that I reflect on. What did I learn? What did I contribute? Have I achieved my goal of supporting the members on their journey? What could I have done differently? These and other questions I will ponder for the next few months and no doubt, I will find moments to celebrate and moments to learn from. I am grateful to the members for entrusting me with the role of District Director for the best district in the world!

The memorable moments during my tenure include working with the Club Presidents who are all extremely dedicated to their clubs, the DEC and DC members who dedicate countless hours to ensuring the District runs smoothly and that the members are served and of course, with my leadership team. I could not have done this without the support and guidance of Sherry, Tom, Lawrence and Carol. These individuals were quietly working in the background to create the best environment in which all of our members could learn and grow.

I am humbled and grateful.

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Reflections



Sherry MacDonald, DTM

Program Quality Director

As we wind down the 2024-25 Toastmaster year and I reflect, I am proud of everything we accomplished and the opportunities for growth given to our members. As in the past number of years, this too was a year of transition. We saw an improvement to Pathways, our online educational tool. From TIs direction, we experienced in-person only contests. And lastly we had several in-person TLI's. Although in-person events are not possible for all, those that did attend enjoyed being back in that environment.

As I shared at the beginning of my Program Quality Director journey, to achieve what was planned, a team was required. So many members, too many to count, were involved in every activity both in front and behind the scenes. Our Toastmasters volunteer hours were extensive. The Fall Workshop, speech contests, Area Director visits, conference and TLIs involved many people from hosting the workshops to collecting ballots. Each member contributed to the success of the event. Ideally I would love to list everyone's name but I wasn't given that much space in the Newsletter and I am fearful I would miss someone. Thank you to everyone for your contribution to our District and especially our members. I want to give a special thanks to Jenny Theriault, Erin McMenemy and Lorelei Grecian who worked diligently throughout this Toastmasters year. Jenny not only planned our webinars but listened in order to understand the topics that you, our members, wanted. Erin and Lorelei began working on our 2025 Conference a full year ago and planned and executed a weekend full of education, entertainment and fun.

Educational achievements are an important part of our growth and journey. To date our members have logged over 500 educational achievements, with 43 members achieving a Triple Crown (3 or more educational awards). There were a lot of projects and speeches happening over the past year! Congratulations to everyone who completed a Level and to those working to do so.

I hope each one of you stretched yourself a little this year and experienced growth while doing so... I know I have. I had the opportunity to work beside and learn from dedicated Toastmasters at every level of the organization. From new members who re-energized me when I was feeling discouraged to seasoned Toastmasters who provided guidance and support to help me work through a hurdle. Thank you for supporting me along my journey, as I hope I have supported you along yours.



Reflections



Tom Macisso, DTM
Club Growth Director

As our Toastmaster year winds down, and we're still feeling the positive vibes from our fantastic Conference, I just want to express my thoughts and gratitude for our (your) Club Growth team!



Building a winning team requires several key factors, they include:

- Creating a welcoming culture
- Involving everyone on your team
- Building bonds - outside your meeting or subject area
- Recognizing & celebrating successes
- Tell your team's story

When you do this, working together typically leads to greater collaboration, deeper bonds, and of course, more success.

Words can't express how lucky I am to be part of a team that includes, DTM Maria Winn, Club Coach Chair, Antoine LeGresley, Club Sponsor Chair, DTM Teri Kingston, DTM Marion Taylor, and Club Extension Chair, M.E. Lawlor. We learned, laughed, and collaborated throughout the year.



Reflections



Lawrence Kelly

Public Relations Manager



I thank **Sharon Joseph** for reaching out last May to ask me to serve as Public Relations Manager. It took a week of reflection before I said yes, and I'm thankful that I did. This year brought personal and professional growth. I developed as a leader, learned to adapt quickly, and found new ways to connect with members across the district.

I would not have been successful without my incredible newsletter committee: **Antoine LeGresley, Brittany Dixon, Jeffrey Roy, and Laboni Ahsan**. I also want to thank **Albert Cormier**, who contributed to preparing several district-wide messages that went out to our members.

This role gave me the chance to build a wide range of skills. I became more comfortable designing graphics in Canva that align with Toastmasters branding. I learned how to plan and send email campaigns that communicate clearly and respectfully. I also gained a stronger grasp of social media, everything from organizing content calendars to understanding what types of posts spark interaction and reach a wider audience.

I am especially grateful to Past Public Relations Managers **DJ Turchon** and **Lesley Carter** for sharing their knowledge and guidance throughout the year. Lesley also generously stepped in to help with social media while I was away on vacation.

A big thank you to all the clubs and individuals who shared content for the quarterly newsletters. Your submissions helped us showcase the vibrancy of District 45. And finally, a special note about the Trail Blazers: reading every nomination and crafting each post gave me a connection to so many Toastmasters across the district. While the social media work behind the scenes was substantial, it felt like I got to know the people behind each achievement.

Thank you all for being part of this journey.



Reflections

I am thankful to SLT Team members for the experience in serving as the District Administration Manager. I began the year with intense enthusiasm to grow, meet other SLT members and work to benefit District 45. Being assigned to write the District SLT succession plan workbook was a good experience for me.

Working with Team members brought me closer to discovering the tight-knit working strategies to incorporate into Senior Leadership. I thank Sharon for the opportunity to step up for inclusion on the SLT.

No one can predict the future, and I was no exception. Health issues exhausted me and each SLT member reached out in understanding. I found myself a little rusty technologically, having been retired from the workforce for seven years.

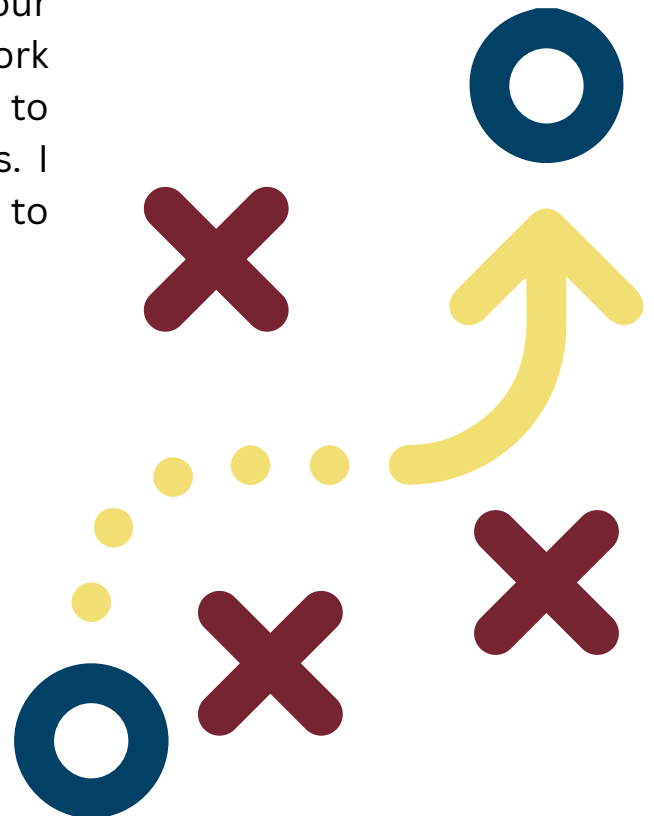
"For the members, by the members," our motto for the year challenged me to work independently and stretch my abilities to do work with others to achieve progress. I am thankful to the SLT for allowing me to serve as District Administration Manager.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Coolidge

Administration Manager



Reflections



Lorna Walters, DTM


Area 13 Director, Division C

What did I like best about being an Area Director?

First, I would have to say that I loved meeting and interacting with every single Toastmaster member, despite being via Zoom. After a year of online interaction, I am super excited and look forward to meeting some of them, face-to-face, at the upcoming Spring Conference in Moncton. A Conference that I may not have even considered without my Area Director experience.

Secondly, fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of an Area Director initially felt like it would be a Sisyphean task, however it turned out to be a great learning opportunity and experience. It has given me greater insight into the operation of Toastmasters, especially at the Area and District levels. It afforded me the opportunity to surround myself with seasoned members as well as new members and guests, all of whom I learned from and along with. I witnessed growth in the members, as well as in the individual Clubs. I was welcomed, appreciated, and supported by professional and dedicated Toastmaster members from all 5 of my Clubs, as well as from District Staff.

This experience has enriched my Toastmasters journey beyond what I could have imagined. It has rejuvenated me in ways that I would not have thought possible and it has reiterated my love of and passion for Toastmasters and why I remain a member. I highly encourage other members to become involved at the District level; you won't regret it!



Serving as an Area Director is one of the most rewarding leadership roles in Toastmasters. You'll support club success, help members grow, and gain valuable experience working with a team of leaders across the District.

If you're curious, considering it, or already interested, now's the time to reach out. Incoming Division Directors are actively recruiting Area Directors for the 2025–2026 Toastmasters year:


United States Clubs – Connect with Paul Coddington, DTM

NB & PEI – Connect with Stephen Clark, DTM

NS & NL – Connect with Lawrence Kelly

Interested in earning your Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award?
Serving as an Area Director fulfills the District Leadership requirement.

Ready to lead? Make a difference in your Area!



District Buzz - Concord Toastmasters

The Concord Toastmasters welcomed new members Ann West and Bob Niegisch in February.



Ann West, Dale Randall (center), and Bob Niegisch

District Buzz - Division C Contests



Veerendra Nagalla
Division C Director

Thank you so much for your invaluable support in making the contests successful.

Thanks to **Shelley, Lorna, and Stephen** for your support. I truly appreciate Sherry for sharing materials and providing direction in organizing my maiden in-person speech contest.

I'd like to express my gratitude to **Carol Ann, Sheryl, the Area Directors, and all who joined via Zoom** for their participation and encouragement.



A heartfelt thanks to all functionaries, without whom this event would not have been possible:

- **Luke Stennick (Chief Judge)**
- **Aaron Stephenson, Monica, and Jennifer Bishop (Judges)**
- **Heather (Ballot Counter)**
- **Marion Taylor (Timer)**

We want to give a special mention to **Rifq**, our Youth Leadership Program participant, for delivering the Test Speech in the Evaluation Speech Contest.

We were honoured to have **Patricia MacNevin (Past District Governor)** and **Richard Redman (Regional Director, Air Cadets – New Brunswick)** attend in person.

Lastly, my sincere thanks to our volunteers:

- **Mukesh**, for assisting with Zoom
- **Tarun**, for capturing the moments through photography

Your support and dedication made this event truly memorable. Thank you all!

District Buzz - Division C Contests



AREA 02 **International Speech Contest**
Winner: Joe Grondin – True Blue TM Club, Moncton

AREA 13 **International Speech Contest**
Winner: Gary Belding – Civil Speakers TM Club, Fredericton
2nd Place: Aaron Willie – River Valley TM Club, Florenceville-Bristol

Evaluation Speech Contest
Winner: Aaron Willie – River Valley TM Club, Florenceville-Bristol



Youth Leadership Program for the 333 Lord Beaverbrook Squadron Air Cadets



In the spring of 2025, the 333 Lord Beaverbrook Squadron Air Cadets embarked on a remarkable journey of growth and self-discovery through the Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program. Veeru Nagalla, the Division C Director for Toastmasters (2024–2025), facilitated the program, which spanned six dynamic sessions and equipped more than 18 young cadets with essential communication and leadership skills. This lead came from Carl D and Veeru's passion and mentor experience, making each session a unique blend of learning, confidence-building, and fun.

The program's success was made possible through the efforts of a dedicated team. Paul, the Former Regional Director, and Richard, the Regional Director for the New Brunswick Air Cadet League, were instrumental in ensuring seamless coordination. Captain Brunelle and other officers and volunteers provided consistent support, reinforcing the shared commitment to youth development. Each session saw cadets step out of their comfort zones—crafting speeches, taking on leadership roles, and offering thoughtful feedback to peers, all under the structured yet encouraging environment of Toastmasters.

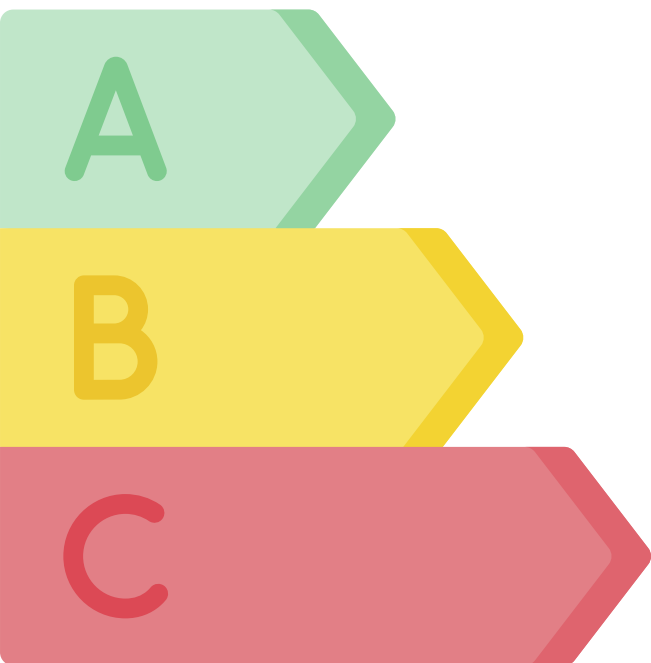
The highlight of the initiative came when the cadets showcased their skills at the New Brunswick Provincial competitions held at the historic Government House. Toastmasters Aron Willie, Gary Belding, and Ray Savoi stepped in as judges and functionaries, adding gravitas and professionalism to the event. Among the standout performers was Onkit Saha, a participant from the 333 Squadron's Youth Leadership Program, who secured second place and earned a spot at the national level competition—a proud moment for all involved.

Inspired by the cadets' enthusiasm and growth, Regional Director Richard announced plans to establish a dedicated Gavel Club for the 333 Lord Beaverbrook Squadron. This club will offer cadets a continued pathway to hone their speaking and leadership abilities year-round, ensuring that the momentum built through the Youth Leadership Program carries forward. The seeds planted by this collaborative effort between Toastmasters and the Air Cadets have begun to bloom, nurturing the next generation of confident, articulate leaders in New Brunswick and beyond.



Acceptance... Belonging... Caring.

Positive qualities that highlight engagement, nurturing, and growth. The first letter of each word identifies another 'ABC', the **Amoskeag Better Communicators**. This club, an "advanced club with an emphasis on strong evaluation," is based in Manchester, New Hampshire, which is about 15 miles north of Nashua. I feel humbled and honoured to have been appointed as their Club Coach. This represents a 'full circle' time for me. My late mother and my late aunt had three aunts who lived for many years in Nashua. In the summer of 1977, I was fortunate to accompany my mother and aunt on a visit to Nashua. Now, I have 'returned home'.



The club meets once a month online. Most of the members have a home club & join ABC to level up to help them realize their educational goals. Round Robin evaluations are common but not required. The ABC club is a great place to practice longer presentations that would not be acceptable in home clubs because of the time. Or members may practice for a speech contest, or a speech outside of Toastmasters.

Jeffrey Roy, DTM

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS MESSAGE

District 45 Spring Conference 2025

Thank you, District 45! What a wonderful celebration! To all the clubs represented, we extended our deepest gratitude for your support in lending out your members for the weekend and raffle items donated.

Congratulations to all who competed in the Evaluation, Humorous and International Speech Contests. We send off our International Speech Contest winner, Joe Grondin, to the next level of Toastmasters competition.

Congratulations to all who were awarded for their dedication and support to Toastmasters and how they shine brightly in their communities, clubs, areas and divisions!

Thank You to our sponsors - District 45 Toastmasters, Athena Executive Education Inc. and Atlantic Online Evaluators.

The biggest THANK YOU!!!! to our volunteers who showed up in the chaos to create a beautiful celebration for our members! You are amazing! May your learnings guide you to the next step of your Toastmasters and life journey!

Educational sessions will be posted to YouTube in the future for those who wish to see them. Watch them on our D45TV YouTube channel.

You can find some photos of our shenanigans on D45 Facebook or search Facebook for **#d45toastmasters #LightsCameraCommunicate**

Keep Shining! We will see you next year to celebrate again, District 45 Toastmasters!

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The opening ceremony begins with representatives carrying flags from across our district.



DTM Gauntlet in action – a proud tradition where newly minted DTMs are welcomed by their peers in celebration of their achievement.



Charles Burrell of The Humanity Project accepts the 2024 – 25 Communication and Leadership Award, presented by District Director Sharon Joseph, DTM.

Plenary speaker David Cormier, DTM, delivers his session “Grow Your Mind. Grow Your Power. Grow Your Leadership.” to an engaged District 45 audience.



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Lawrence Kelly, Public Relations Manager, announces the winners of this year's Video Testimonial Challenge, celebrating members who shared their Toastmasters stories.

Newsletter | Claudia Alve



Members had fun striking a pose at the D45 Conference photo booth. A little fun goes a long way when building community.

Past International President Pat Johnson, DTM, delivered an engaging educational session titled "How to Revitalize Your Club." Pat shared practical strategies for building stronger, more vibrant clubs.



After a full day of learning and leadership, members kept the energy going with a round of karaoke... proving that District 45 Toastmasters know how to work and play.



AWARDS

Toastmaster of the Year Antoine LeGresley



The Toastmaster of the Year award is given to a member who best exemplifies Toastmasters International values in supporting the District and club missions.

Antoine has been a Toastmaster since 2019 and in such a short period of time he has shown himself to be the model embodiment of a Toastmaster. He exemplifies respect, integrity, service and excellence in all areas and is always ready to lend a hand. He quietly goes about his activities preferring not to be in the spotlight. There are no words to adequately describe the positive impact he has made this year. Thank you to Antoine for being the leader that District 45 needs.

AWARDS

DAVE ROSVALL AWARD

Recipient: Marion Taylor, DTM

This award is presented to a District 45 Toastmaster who has demonstrated long-term and meritorious service to the District above the club level.

Marion is one of our District's most active members and belongs to multiple clubs. She exudes enthusiasm for Toastmasters and our educational programs. She was both Pathways Guide and Ambassador when our new program was launched, and continues to be one of the most knowledgeable members when it comes to Pathways. She's a huge supporter of all members, encouraging everyone to embrace the Pathways program and achieve multiple Levels. She's also a great example, having now achieved multiple DTMs, and multiple Triple Crown awards, including in July of a new Toastmasters year. She served as Club coach for Civil Speakers a few years back and helped bring them to President's Distinguished status. She's always ready to help. She stepped in as interim VPE for Civil Speakers this year when the incumbent couldn't continue. She served as both Area and Division Director.



Recipient: Reese Eskridge, DTM

This award is presented to a Distinguished Toastmaster who exemplifies the mission and values of a Toastmaster and empowers fellow Toastmasters to be successful by sharing the spotlight.

On top of being an Area Director this year, Reese hosted Sunday Night Insights. The purpose of these sessions is to aid less experienced Toastmasters in their leadership development by providing practical yet underutilized Toastmasters resources one at a time in a logical order. This training is geared toward current and aspiring District 45 club officers, but anyone is welcome to participate. Reese is hosting these sessions because he wishes to offer Toastmasters the type of mentorship and support he wished he had when he stepped up as a club officer in his early years as a Toastmaster. He is an engaged leader that is ready to take on any challenge and request to support his fellow member. Truly a worthy recipient for this award.

SHIRLEY KELLY AWARD

AWARDS

DIVISION DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Recipient: Veerendra Nagalla

The Division Director of the Year is based on the Division's performance and the individual's contributions to that achievement. The achievements are measured across membership building and retention, club extensions, Distinguished Club Program, education and training, leadership commitment and support, and public relations.

Veerendra took on the mantle of Division C Director this year along with the role of Speechcraft Chair. He connects the Toastmasters family and the Toastmaster tools at his disposal to bring awareness to the general public about Toastmasters and what learning and leadership can do for them. He engaged many Toastmasters to lead Speechcraft sessions knowing this is a good opportunity to grow the Toastmasters membership. He is always looking for innovative ways to bring the community and Toastmasters together for the benefit of all. He was a great support to the Area Directors and the clubs of Division C.



Recipient: Tamara Elwood

The Area Director of the Year is based on the Area's performance and the individual's contributions to that achievement. The achievements are measured across membership building and retention, club extensions, Distinguished Club Program, education and training, leadership commitment and support, and public relations.

Tamara Elwood provided strong and consistent support to the clubs in her area. She also provided guidance to her fellow Area Directors and led the organization of Area as well as stepping in for the Division contests. She willingly volunteered when she identified a gap and worked to ensure that our members had the best possible experience. Tamara worked hard not just for Area 9 members but all members in Division D and did so each time with a smile.

AREA DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

AWARDS

DARLENE DUNN AWARD

Recipient: Alexa Vodicka

This award recognizes the late Darlene Dunn and is awarded to a member who has exhibited the heart and soul of what Toastmasters mentorship is: “Encouraging success of others before self.”

The depth of impact Alexa has as a Mentor is rooted in her faith, artistic gifts, personal strength, and devotion to encouraging and improving the lives of others. I first met Alexa in 2014 and feel blessed to have grown personally and professionally from spending time in her presence. Her expertise in Teamwork and Goal Focus, balanced with her talents at Creative and Artistic Expression combine to reveal a person with a quality and impact I have rarely encountered.

Following are examples of the impact Alexa has had as a Mentor to individuals:

1) Early on in her time with the Provincially Speaking Club, Alexa transitioned seamlessly and comfortably into being Mentor for several members; this quality and service continues to bless that club.



Alexa Vodicka received the Darlene Dunn Award and the second award is the Multimedia Omnipresence Award, she accepted on behalf of her club.

2) Her impact as a Mentor upon myself has been significant and thorough. I had been away from Toastmasters for almost 20 years, thus most things were new to me when I rejoined. The support and encouragement I received from Alexa helped me to ease into the current Toastmasters system.

3) With Alexa’s mentorship, my confidence grew to the extent that I took on the role of our club’s Vice President Education for 2024-2025. Her impact is evident in that, as of this submission, our club is very close to achieving all 10 Goals in the Distinguished Club Program.

Following are recent examples of the scope and impact of Alexa’s Mentorship with which she has blessed the District:

1) She has created 20 Public Relations social media ads for District 45. This shows the depth of Alexa’s impact, as it encompasses the Coaching aspect of Mentorship.

2) She has provided Toastmasters exposure on the platform Viva Engage. This has generated positive response and prospective new members. This has allowed her to reveal her skills as a Mentor to an even larger group of people.

3) She had a meeting with the VPPR of Amoskeag Better Communicators in New Hampshire. Alexa provided Mentorship support to assist the club to increase interaction and commitment from members and increase membership numbers through Public Relations & Social Media.

AWARDS

Mary E. Hunter Lifelong Learner Award *Recipient: Mintrude Charles-Young*



Named after longtime Toastmaster Mary Hunter, this award honours a retired member who shows a strong commitment to lifelong learning. The recipient is actively involved in the Toastmasters Educational Program, stays engaged in their community, and volunteers their time generously—even beyond Toastmasters.

Mintrude Charles-Young, a member of Sussex Toastmasters Club (#05386) has been nominated for this award. Mintrude is a retired lecturer who joined Toastmasters with gusto. She is currently a member of 3 Clubs and has also completed 3 Pathway paths. Mintrude Charles-Young is an active member of her Community and has worked on promoting and publicizing the Black histories of Canadians in Canada. Mintrude has also worked on helping to integrate a family from Nigeria into the community in Halifax.

APPRECIATION AWARDS

IRINA ALBERT MATEOS:

AREA 17 DIRECTOR

As a fresh grad from UPEI, Irina presents herself as a model for this next generation. She continues to build her professional public speaking skills and style.

(In fact last year this club recognized her as "Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year" for our club.) She has only been with the club for a few years yet has been great at not 'volunteering', to help out, for example swerving on our club's executive. Going that extra step - Irina spearheaded the recent Area 17 contest in Summerside. For context, she was putting together the first in-person Area 17 contest in over 5 years. She did a great job making it happen, which is more impressive when you learn that she doesn't have a car, and is located in Charlottetown! She managed to pull together enough volunteers, which is very impressive as she did not have an established network that a more established member may have.

LAWRENCE KELLY - Public Relations Manager, Lawrence says "Yes" to every request without hesitation. He thinks without boundaries and continually finds ways to improve and highlight member recognition.



CHRISTOPHER HANNON - As creator of The 10x30 Initiative, Christopher created a tool that was available to all clubs who wanted to expand their membership to include the next generation of Toastmasters. With his thoughtful insights into engaging with youth, Christopher showed how they want to connect and how we, as Toastmasters, can serve them with their goals and on their journey to achieving leadership.

AWARDS

Multimedia Omnipresence Award

Recipient: Provincially Speaking Toastmasters

This award is presented at the annual conference to the club judged to use all aspects of public relations to the best advantage of their club. Included could be: newspaper, newsletters, website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

Our Public Relations Objectives– The club promotes:

Toastmasters International – their purpose, benefits, and how to join Our club (Provincially Speaking Toastmasters) – our intentions, goals, benefits and how to join Our club’s activities (eg, Open House).

Individual member’s or group’s progress or activities, contributions or successes (eg, a new member completing an Ice Breaker speech; cheering on a member entering and competing in a contest; cheering on a member completing a Pathway).

Benefits of being a Toastmaster (how Toastmasters increases our listening, speaking, leadership, and mentoring skills in professional and personal lives, which also increases our confidence).

Inspiring phrases for motivational purposes Promoting Area and District TLI, videos, contests and conferences.

Building promo material (social media and for the newsletter) for D45’s 2025 Spring Conference.

Share and gain knowledge and ideas from fellow Executive – at D45 monthly meetings, and through one-on-one meetings (virtual) with clubs near and far.

Learn and improve on PR efforts by tuning them into endless, wonderful Toastmasters resources, sharing them with professional speaking organizations (including universities, and associations) and resources with fellow Toastmasters.

Promotion Outputs:

Imagery, e-Postcards
Videos (eg, interviews)
Stories
Flyers and Posters
Email campaign for event (eg, Open Houses)

Promotion Vehicles:

- Social Media: Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn
- Club’s website – public and member section
- Our workplaces have an internal social media platform that we’ve tapped into to help employees conquer their fear of public speaking. In January 2025 we created a channel “Improving our Public Speaking Skills”. There are now 260 members. We use this channel to inspire and help staff and promote Toastmasters in this channel. Provincially Speaking Toastmasters has gained new members thanks to this channel, and many inquiries about and interest in joining Toastmasters.
- Community Outreach (eg, posters at community centres, and libraries)

CONTESTS

The excitement was high at the recent District 45 Toastmasters Annual Conference, where our members showcased exceptional public speaking skills across International Speech, Humorous Speech, and Evaluation contests. Here are the memorable highlights:



International Speech Contest

The stage was set and the spotlight was on at the District 45 Conference, where our top speakers competed in the International Speech Contest.

- **First Place: Joe Grondin, DTM, AS**
- **Second Place: Aaron Brown**
- **Third Place: Christopher Hannon**

Each contestant delivered a message that moved and inspired the audience. District 45 wishes the best of luck to Joe Grondin as he advances to the quarter-finals of the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking!

*Special thanks to Jenny Theriault, Contest Chair, for organizing and overseeing this standout event.
Participants: Gary Belding, Geoff MacDonald, Lesley Nase, Vatsal Sood.*



CONTESTS

Evaluation Contest

Evaluation contestants demonstrated exceptional analytical skills, providing constructive feedback to a featured speaker with precision, clarity, and insight.

- **First Place:** Crystal Cobb, DTM
- **Second Place:** Sharon Forbrigger, DTM

Special thanks to Patricia Saucier, DTM for serving as the Contest Chair.



CONTESTS



A Special Thank You

We extend our appreciation to all contest participants who shared their talents and insights, making the contests a memorable highlight of the conference.

Humorous Speech Contest

Laughter echoed through the room during the Humorous Speech Contest at the District 45 Conference, and our contestants did not disappoint!

- **First Place:** Joeline Thomas
- **Second Place:** Melissa Miller
- **Third Place:** Crystal Cobb, DTM

A big thank you to Anne Doucette, DTM, for serving as Contest Chair.

Participants: Arnaly Arriaga, Sharon Forbrigger, Marcia Rogowsky.

DISTINGUISHED TOASTMASTER

TOM GOODWIN, DTM, PDD

What was your DTM project, and why did you choose it?

My DTM project was to work with the HR and career development staff at my company to raise awareness of Toastmasters within the company. We emphasized the benefits to those employees who work directly with clients or are on a career path to be client-facing advisors. While starting a corporate club within my company was not a stated goal of the DTM project, it did lead to the creation of FLP Financially Speaking Toastmasters.

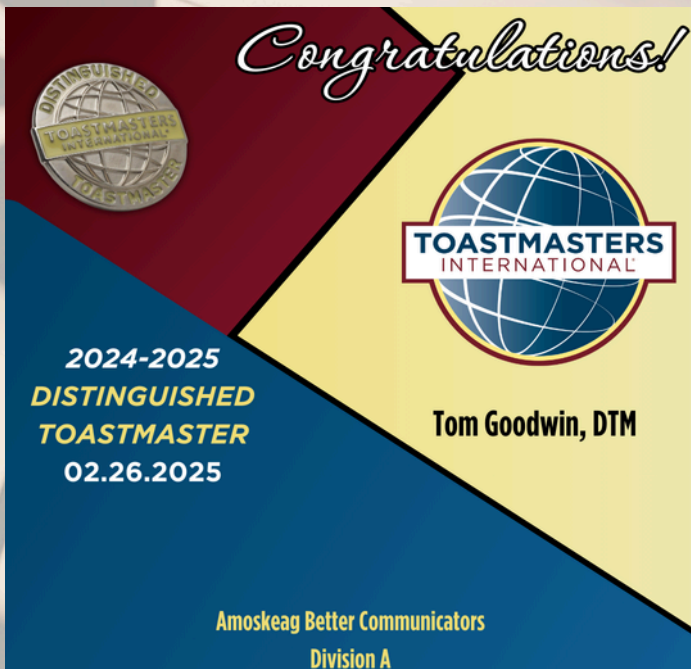
What did you gain from working on this DTM project?

In doing this project, I began to understand how necessary these communication and leadership skills were in the financial services industry and how rare it is for a company to offer the development of these skills.



How has your journey to DTM impacted your personal, professional, and Toastmasters life?

Since this is my 4th DTM, but first Pathways DTM, my journey in Toastmasters continues to have a positive impact on both my professional career and my work in the community since 2007. I continue to use the skills developed in Toastmasters in my Board position for a non-profit organization and as president of my homeowner's association.



What is your next Toastmasters goal?

I have already held almost every position in Toastmasters, so my next goal is to continue to take the skills developed in Toastmasters and apply them within my community.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

RISHABH KESKAR

1. What motivated you to start your journey with Toastmasters, and how has your experience changed or grown since then?

I always thought that in the tech industry you need mainly technical skills to advance your career. When I got into my Grad school, I got a lot of reality checks. I realized that apart from technical skills your communication skills are also extremely important. In fact, no matter how technically skilled you are, if you're unable to get your point across, you won't be perceived as credible. After experiencing setbacks I decided that I need to work on my communication skills. After I started my full time job I looked for an organization which would help me with that and I came across a local Toastmasters.

My life has completely changed since I joined Toastmasters. It has helped me tremendously. I am a more confident talker. I have better communication and social skills. I feel more at ease. In addition, it has also helped me to grow at a personal level.

2. What skill or strength have you developed through Toastmasters that's made the biggest difference outside the club?

I have become more social and personable. I can connect with people much better than before.

3. Who has influenced your Toastmasters journey the most, and what did you learn from them?

Many people have influenced my Toastmasters journey. I'd first like to thank Kelly Stacey. We were members of the same club. She encouraged me to give speeches and pushed me to step up to officer roles. Being an officer made a huge difference. In addition, I would like to thank Donna Accettullo for teaching me a lot of life lessons. She gave me a lot of her time. I'm very grateful to her. I learned a lot of life experiences from her.

I would also like to thank Patricia Saucier and Sharon Joseph. They gave me an opportunity to serve as an Area Director. Being an Area Director opened a lot of opportunities for me. I am grateful to them. I learned consistency, and empathy from Patricia. Patricia also inspired me how to be grounded and be patient. She taught me how to lead by example.

I learned how to lead, show empathy, and how to be optimistic from Sharon Joseph. She gave me confidence and taught me life lessons. She also taught me how to deal with difficult situations while maintaining your grace. She is charismatic and a great mentor.

Sharon has motivated and inspired me to become an all-rounded person.

I'd like to thank Sharon and Patricia once again for having faith in me and giving me a chance to serve as an Area Director.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MARION TAYLOR, DTM

My Toastmasters Journey: From Fear to Triumph

How Toastmasters Transformed My Life

My Toastmasters journey began in 2009, driven by a deep-seated lack of confidence and a pressing need to communicate effectively with complete strangers at their locations. For those who know me now, this seems almost unbelievable, but it was the primary reason I decided to join my first Toastmasters club.

From Timidity to Confidence

I joined Toastmasters with trepidation, uncertain of what lay ahead. However, without even realizing the transformation occurring within me, I continued to learn from my fellow Toastmasters club members. Their unwavering support and insightful feedback gradually built my confidence, propelling me forward. It was a journey of constant growth and self-discovery.

A Milestone in Johannesburg

One significant milestone in my journey was after an application implementation in Johannesburg. The CIO greeted me on my first morning back and complimented the successful implementation and the kudos I had received from the company. This encounter was a testament to the skills and confidence I had developed through Toastmasters. The experience was not just a professional victory but a personal triumph, affirming my capabilities and the invaluable training I had received.

From Timidity to Confidence

The Toastmasters community is a nurturing environment where members grow together, supporting each other's journey toward effective communication and leadership. It is a space where fears are faced, skills are honed, and leaders are made.

Continuous Learning and Growth

Toastmasters is not just a club; it is a lifelong journey of learning. Each meeting, speech, and evaluation is an opportunity to improve and grow. The diverse experiences and perspectives of members enrich the learning process, making it a holistic and fulfilling experience.

Gratitude and Acknowledgment

Reflecting on my journey, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the numerous individuals who supported me along the way. While it is impossible to mention everyone, there are a few whose impact was truly profound.

Patricia MacNevin: A Beacon of Inspiration

One such individual is Patricia MacNevin, our club's first Area 13 Governor. Patricia demonstrated what one could achieve with Toastmasters training. Her leadership, encouragement, and belief in me were pivotal in my development. She was an inspiration, showing me the heights one could reach with dedication and the right guidance.

Conclusion

My Toastmasters journey has been one of transformation, from a timid individual to a confident communicator. The skills and confidence I have gained are invaluable, impacting both my personal and professional life. I am grateful for the support of my fellow Toastmasters, especially Patricia MacNevin, Gary Belding, Carl Duivenvoorden, Joe Grondin, whose influence was instrumental. Toastmasters is more than a club; it is a community where leaders are nurtured, and lives are transformed.

As I continue on this journey, I look forward to new challenges, growth opportunities, and the chance to support others in their own Toastmasters path. Toastmasters has changed my life, and I am forever grateful for the experiences and the people who have been a part of this incredible journey.

CELEBRATING 49 YEARS OF DEDICATION

HONOURING JAMES “CHUMMIE” MACDONALD, DTM



At our June 11th meeting, Dartmouth Toastmasters came together to celebrate a remarkable milestone — 49 years of continuous membership, leadership, and service by **James “Chummie” MacDonald, DTM**.

Chummie joined Toastmasters on November 1, 1976, and has since made an incredible mark on our club and District 45. In 1983, just seven years after joining, Chummie was named Area Governor of the Year, and in 1999 he received what he has always considered the highest honour: District 45 Toastmaster of the Year.

His legacy includes winning countless speech contests, especially in the Tall Tales and Humorous Speech categories, where his trademark wit and storytelling lit up stages and left audiences in stitches. Even in his most heartfelt speeches, Chummie has a way of injecting humour from an unexpected angle, which we saw again in a speech that night.

Thank you, Chummie, for everything you've done for our club and our members over the past 49 years.

Submitted by: Lawrence Kelly, D45 Public Relations Manager,
Dartmouth Toastmasters Past President