



# Toast it Notes

## Special Interest Dates:

- Club Speech & Table Topics Contests  
Thurs., March 29, 2007
- Area 18 Speech & Table Topics Contests  
Sat., April 14, 2007
- Division D Speech & Table Topics Contests  
Sat., May 5, 2007
- Division D Spring Leadership Institute  
Sat., June 16 or 23, 2007
- District 45 Spring Conference  
May 25-27, 2007  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

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## Message from the President

Dear Fellow Toastmasters,

WOW! What a dynamic, enthusiastic club we have! Just into the New Year and already we have accomplished so much.

• Six of our Club Officers attended Toastmasters Leadership Institute Training – admirable leadership!

• We have reached the status of **Select Distinguished Club**. In order to achieve all ten goals for **President's Distinguished Club** status we need one more new member and three more Competent Communicators. I know we can do it!

• Congratulations to Dave Hubley for achieving Advanced Communicator Bronze, Dan Walmsley for achieving Competent Leader and Dave Osborne for achieving Competent Communicator!

• This is our third newsletter – tremendous work and very successful.

• Many of our members are diligently working on committees for the 2007 Spring Conference.

Never a dull moment in this club – we are energetic, enthusiastic and having fun learning skills in communication and leadership.

Keep the momentum going and get in the swing for our club

**International Speaking and Table Topics Contest** on March 29th.

When was the last time you challenged yourself to try something different in a speech, to stretch yourself in a new direction? Aim for a speaking spot in the Spring Conference. Start now practicing your speech or table topics, then participate in the club contest. Small challenges are your mile-makers on a winding road to improvement. When it comes to contests, do not let fear stand in your way. Remember you joined Toastmasters to conquer fear. Toastmasters is about growing, reaching new heights. Improvement comes from what we do with what we know – the key is in the doing. When you come to the bend in the road, keep going. As you try new challenges, your confidence and growth will increase. Move from your comfort-zone, have some fun, experience the unexpected curves and bumps and become a better speaker.

Let's finish this year with exuberant growth both in personal progress and club advancement.

Sincerely,  
Erna Slingluff, CTM, CL  
President  
Sears-Halifax Toastmasters



## Get to Know our Members

Our club membership contains a diverse cross-section of Canadian and Nova Scotian culture.

We are very proud of our members and their achievements. In this and subsequent Newsletters, we will present short profiles of our members.

Danny Walmsley, ACB  
Vice President  
Membership



*Are you interested in inviting a friend or colleague to a meeting? Contact our Vice President of Membership, Danny Walmsley.*



**Nick Stuijbergen, CTM**

Nick is one of our longest serving members having been a member since 1981. He works as a navigation analyst in the Canadian Hydrographic Service at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. His work involves providing marine navigation charts and mapping the seabed. Nick lives in the Dartmouth North end, but some wags say that he sometimes dwells mentally in the stratosphere.

He initially joined TMI to improve his people interaction skills, but now it is more like an enjoyable recreational activity. Nick feels that he has benefited tremendously from TMI. About three years after joining and having presented some technical talks in the workplace, he was sent on study leave to acquire an engineering degree. On the social side he finds it much easier now to approach and converse with a diversity of people.

Nick appreciates the club because he likes the easy-going atmosphere, the friendliness of the members, and the valuable tips from evaluations.



**Jill Haverstock, CTM**

Jill is an Executive Coordinator for the regional management team at the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation in Halifax. She is also a nutritional consultant who makes sure people pop the right pills. Jill lives in the Armdale area of Halifax, close to Chocolate Lake.

She joined Toastmasters in March 2005 because she wanted to improve her presentation, public speaking and impromptu speaking skills. As a result of participating, she has gained a lot of self-confidence, particularly because she was Sergeant At Arms for the Club last year (2006). This opportunity enabled her to learn to work as a team member, to organize the meeting space, and to overcome shyness by greeting and welcoming fellow members and guests during our regular meetings.

Jill has attained the CTM designation and is currently working toward completing the Competent Leader designation.

She enjoys the club because there is a great energy and pulse among the members and looks forward to attending the meetings each week.

## What has membership in Toastmasters meant to me?



I'm sure every member in our club would respond differently to this question. For me, it has been an incredible journey of self-discovery. Almost five years ago when I began Toastmasters, I did it to challenge myself to become a better communicator and remove the fear of speaking off the cuff in uncomfortable situations. I wanted to become a person who was confident in any situation, whether it was good or bad.

During my first nine months, I was so afraid of speaking that every time I opened my mouth, my heart felt like it would pound out of my chest. My mind would go totally blank leaving me feeling like an idiot. Yes, even sales people, like myself, get spooked!

As time went on, I learned that participation was the key to my own development as a speaker, a listener and a leader. By taking part in the various roles during each meeting, I became more confident. It didn't seem so bad to stand up and announce the "Ah King or Queen" or to find creative ways to fine members and get a chuckle out of the members. Table Topics became easier each time I participated. I realized that it wasn't the topic or the time that counted, but how I told the story.

I began presenting speeches and learning the techniques of giving a great presentation, I realized that all I had to do was follow the

manual, prepare and practice — then I could conquer "FEAR". I knew I had to keep challenging myself to move forward. Yes, each speech was a test of my intelligence and fortitude. A little fear monger kept sticking thoughts of failure into my mind, so I kept asking myself why did I joined Toastmasters? The same response kept coming back to me "TO GROW AS A PERSON"! If I wasn't going to challenge myself, then who would challenge me?

Then I thought, why stop at communication? Why not try mentoring and leadership? The steps were gradual, but through each process, I gained knowledge, friendship and respect for others as well as myself.

Through participation as a member, whether in weekly meeting roles, table topics, speeches or holding a position on the Executive, I have grown! I feel I am a better listener, mentor, communicator and leader now. I know that I will continue to grow as long as I participate.

I hope that you will take the plunge and conquer all of your fears and become a more effective member of our club.

Karen Caldwell, ATM-B, CL  
Area 18 Governor and Member of  
Sears Halifax Toastmasters



Karen Caldwell, ATM-B



### Interested in Leadership training?

Talk to any club officer if you'd like to consider running for an office in upcoming club elections.



## A Step into the Unknown...

For some bizarre reason, I put my name forward for the Humorous Speech Competition last Fall. I don't know why, but I figured I had a good subject (volunteering with Children) and guessed the experience would be worth its weight in gold. I find this a lot, my mouth just opens and volunteers without thinking it through...I hope to be cured one day.

Unfortunately there was only one other club member who had similar thoughts and so the club competition had the grand total of two competitors. Nevertheless, the competition went ahead and despite my opponent giving an excellent speech, I found myself in the position of 'First Placed' Speaker. This meant that I then had to go on and represent the Club at Area level.

The Area 18 competition was hosted by Ten Beaches Club and was held in a spectacular setting in Hubbards. Strangely, I felt more relaxed doing the speech this time around. I'm not sure if it was the fact that I'd had more time to prepare and managed to do away with my notes completely or the fact that so many of Sears-Halifax turned out to support myself and Denis (who was competing in the Evaluation contest). Again I was disappointed to find that there were only three competitors. Anyway, it was an excellent day and I found myself placed second, and eligible to go forward to the Division D Competition to be held in the Penthouse Suite at the Northwood Centre.



**Graeme Van Leer accepting his award from Erna Slingluff**

Now this was something totally different – playing with the big boys. Seasoned Toastmasters from across the region were there and I was up against some really good speakers. In total there were eight speakers. When the draw was made for speaking order, I was first. Now the nerves started to take hold. I'm thinking to myself 'Why couldn't I just keep quiet? Why did I volunteer for this?' However, then I started thinking, where else would I get this sort of experience? Where else could I be among friends who, even if you make a complete fool of yourself, will still offer encouragement? No, this was great I thought, let me at them! My name was called and up I went.

Now I must mention the venue. It's a great place to hold meetings – it has superb views over the harbour. However, there is a massive pillar right in the middle of the room, and when you are up speaking you are facing the audience (obviously) but behind them are two elevators. Unfortunately during my speech, these doors kept opening and some of the... *(continued pg 5)*



## Inspiration for members!

Whether you're contemplating the upcoming speech competition or you've never thought of it, reading this article by Graeme Van Leer will encourage your participation.

## A Step into the Unknown... continued

people who spilled out from them were completely oblivious to the fact that not only was there a competition in full swing, but that **I** was speaking. Not one of our seasoned Toastmasters, but little old me with a mere 5 projects under my belt. The first time the doors opened, I was really thrown and totally lost my place. Now I've been told no-one noticed, but believe me I noticed and as a consequence I never really got fully back on track. But that is what makes the whole contest thing so worth while. It throws you into situations over which you have no control and you have to deal with them fast. It's all very well getting up every few weeks (or months!) and speaking in front of the club, but the problem is that you become familiar. It's almost like a family gathering. Every now and again you need to be jolted out of complacency. I wasn't placed at the Division Level, but it didn't matter. It was the experience that counted for everything. One really good side benefit of competing is that it gives you extra confidence when you do your next speech at club level. You stand up there and you think to yourself, "Hey I've spoken at Division Level, how difficult can this be?". It works, it really does and I would highly recommend everyone put their name down for the International Speech Contest which is fast approaching....you won't regret it!

Graeme Van Leer, TM  
Vice President of Education

## Weekly Club Awards December 2006 to February 2007\*

### Best Table Topics:

Jane Holden, TM  
Erna Slingsluff, CTM  
Ralph Smith, ATM-B  
Phil Brizzee, TM  
Graeme Van Leer, TM  
Denis Liboiron, TM  
Danny Walmsley, ACB  
Dave Hubley, ACB  
Rick Joseph, DTM

### Best Speaker:

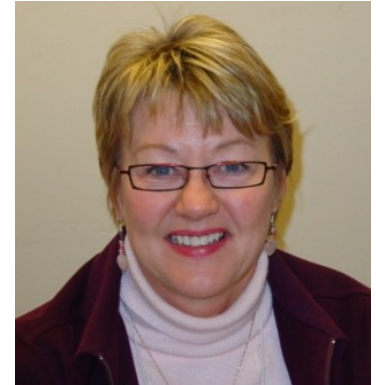
Cameron Deacoff, TM  
Danny Walmsley, ACB  
Mike Goodyear, TM  
Jane Holden, TM  
Jetske Goslinga, TM  
Karen Caldwell, ATM-B  
Faye Routledge, TM  
Tara Keel, TM

### Best Evaluator:

Karen Caldwell, ATM-B  
Denis Liboiron, TM  
Jill Haverstock, CTM  
Danny Walmsley, ACB  
Cameron Deacoff, TM  
Rick Joseph, DTM  
Jim McMorran, DTM

### Most Enthusiastic:

Jane Holden, TM  
Dave Osborne, ATM-S  
Danny Walmsley, ACB  
Ralph Smith, ATM-B  
Graeme Van Leer, TM  
Denis Liboiron, TM  
Karen Caldwell, ATM-B  
Tara Keel, TM



### New

## Achievement

February 8, 2007  
Our club recognized  
Erna Slingsluff, CTM  
for completing  
**High Performance  
Leadership**  
with The United Way.



## "Dues are due."

It would be appreciated  
if you could bring your  
dues of \$45.00 to the  
meeting **March 8th**.

While cash is easier, you  
may write a cheque to  
Sears-Halifax  
Toastmasters.



## Guest Recruitment Campaign

### February 1 - March 29, 2007

How did you first become involved in Toastmasters? Did someone invite you to come as a guest before you decided to join? Most of us first came to Toastmasters as a guest, and joined only after seeing how effective and fun it could be. Do you have fun as a club member and enjoy the company of interesting Toastmasters? Have you reaped benefits through Toastmasters? Have you shared these experiences with others?

Our new Guest Recruitment Campaign began on Thursday February 1, 2007 and runs through Thursday March 29. Its goal is to inspire club members to bring guests to our club meetings.

All club members are invited to participate. How does the campaign work? For each guest that you bring in, you receive one point. Each time that guest returns, you get another point. If that guest joins the club, the sponsoring member gets two points. At the end of the contest, the points will be tallied and the winner will be recognized and awarded a \$30 gift certificate towards purchases at the District 45 2007 Spring Conference bookstore.

In the June 2006 Toastmasters Magazine, Jennifer Blanck wrote that Toastmasters members are the best advertising possible. They are walking and talking proof of the program's effectiveness. While this may be true, the vast majority of our guests and new members over the past two years have come to us through external referrals and through our club website, NOT through our own members. Guests are important to all clubs, not only because they become our future members, but also because their presence at club meetings inspires us to achieve new heights in enthusiasm and perform at peak levels.

Why should you talk up Toastmasters? In addition to helping your club membership grow, you can help others to develop their skills, provide a fresh perspective to your club, and develop more competent communicators and leaders in your community.

Cameron J. Deacoff, TM



### "Special bring a guest night"

The meeting on **March 8** will be a special occasion to bring your guest or guests.

There will be an opportunity to meet guests during the break over refreshments.

## District 45 2007 Spring Conference



Have you ever been to a District Toastmasters conference? Ever wanted to go, but couldn't find the time or the money to travel? This year, you're in luck - District 45 is hosting the 2007 Spring Conference right here in Dartmouth, and you're invited!

The Spring Conference offers a wide variety of exciting opportunities for all Toastmasters, from new members through DTMs. The main events are quite substantial, including:

Friday:

- First Timers' event
- Kitchen Party
- Social Suite

Saturday:

- Educational sessions
- Awards luncheon
- Silent and live auctions
- District-level International Speech Contest
- Business meeting
- Governor's Banquet

Sunday

- District-Level International Table Topics Contest

- Conference Wrap-Up

The conference will run from Friday May 25 through Sunday May 27, and will be held at the Holiday Inn Harbourview, located at 101 Wyse Road, Dartmouth.

The Sponsorship Committee is working hard to make this a successful conference for all, at no cost to the District. If you would like to play a role in helping to achieve this goal, please contact Cameron Deacoff, Sponsorship Committee Head. I am seeking an additional five volunteers.

Several Sears Club members are actively engaged in other positions on the Conference Committee: Karen Caldwell is Sponsorship/PR Committee Chair, Erna Slingluff is PR Committee Head, Rick Joseph is Logistics/Sergeant at Arms Chair, Jill Haverstock is Logistics Head, Ralph Smith is Sergeant at Arms Head, and Tony Easton is Finance Committee Chair.

Check out the conference website at

[www.district45conference.com](http://www.district45conference.com)

District Theme for  
2006-2007 is

**O.N.E.**

- Ownership
- Nurturing
- Empowerment

Karen Caldwell, ATM-B, CL  
Area 18 Governor



**Register early to win a complimentary night at the Holiday Inn Harbourview Hotel**

**Early Bird Draws  
on March 31<sup>st</sup> & April 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Toastmasters International  
District 45 Spring Conference  
May 25-27, 2007**

**Dartmouth, Nova Scotia**

**Be There ~ Learn ~ Grow ~ Enjoy**

## The Best Deal in Town

Look at what you get for \$90 a year (plus one-time \$35 to join):

- Two manuals, loaded with communication and leadership training.
- A subscription to *Toastmaster* magazine, a great example of written communication. They accept submissions and I hope to see one from a Sears-Halifax member soon. It's time!
- Access to over 50 educational manuals in our own library.
- Most importantly, the physical experience of a Toastmaster meeting.
- Live exposure to proper Parliamentary Procedure.
- A great follow up to a commercial communication program like Dale Carnegie. Individuals or their companies spend a lot of money on these programs which will be wasted unless there is continuing practice.

Sears-Halifax Toastmasters, we should all spread the word and bring guests so they can see the benefits for themselves.

Ralph Smith, ATM-B  
Sergeant at Arms / Librarian

## Public Relations Update

This issue of our newsletter is focused on membership. Our Vice President of Membership, Dan Walmsley has played a special role in preparing this lead article. Members of the executive committee continue to be important contributors on our newsletter team.

Graeme Van Leer continues to update and improve our website. Cameron Deacoff evaluated the website and offered suggestions for improvement.

To improve the visibility of both our club and Toastmasters International, over the next couple of months notice of our club meetings will appear in local newspapers and in public service announcements on local radio stations. This will include our meeting time & location as well as our website address. Tara Keel has been assisting with this area.

Please feel free to make copies or send "Toast it Notes" by email to your colleagues and friends. This and other newsletters are available as PDFs on our website (Downloads page).

Jane Holden, TM  
Newsletter Editor &  
Vice President Public Relations  
(902) 455-2220 ext.1

### Sears-Halifax Toastmasters

#### Meeting Time:

Thursdays: 6:15-8:15 pm  
Retail Training Room at Sears  
in the Halifax Shopping Centre

#### Phone:

902-433-0819

#### E-Mail:

tm1555@chebucto.ns.ca

#### Website

<http://toastmasters.chebucto.org/>

Watch for the next issue of "Toast it Notes" newsletter May 2007.

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It is not to be used for solicitation and distribution of non-Toastmasters materials or information.