



Toast-it Notes

Club #1555
Sears-Halifax
Toastmasters

Fall 2015

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President's Message

There have been many milestones for the Sears-Halifax Toastmasters Club 1555; however, the biggest and most important achievements are measured by our members' successes as they participate and learn.

The mandate for Sears-Halifax Toastmasters Club is to assist each member to improve their communication and leadership skills in a fun, friendly and safe environment.



As a member, you will learn and grow at your own pace – no one is pushing you along the way. Mentors are provided to assist each member to support their learning experience and help achieve their goals. We want to ensure your experience as a Toastmaster will be enjoyable and successful.

On February 27th, 2016 the Sears-Halifax Toastmasters Club will celebrate its 60th birthday. We are the oldest Toastmaster Club east of Montreal. Our club will host a gala event to celebrate our longevity, accomplishments and success stories. We

hope you will be a part of this magnificent evening.

Guests are always welcome to join us for an evening filled with wonderful speeches, conversations and great learning experiences.

Let's make this year our year to achieve our communication and leadership goals together!

Sincerely,

Karen Caldwell, DTM

President

Sears-Halifax Toastmasters Club # 1555

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Highlights of Speech Competitions and Member Achievements

Here are some photos from the recent speech competitions at Area and Division levels. Our Club was well represented by Karen Caldwell and Ralph Smith at these events. At the Area level, Karen won the Speech Evaluation Contest, while Ralph won the Humorous Speech Contest. Going further to Division level, both Karen and Ralph finished in third place in their respective contests.



Division D Evaluation Speech Contest held on Oct 24 2015. **From left to right:** Phil Elwood (Area 18), Alex O'Donnell (Area 1), Jim Knox (Area 18) Karen Caldwell (Area 21), Chris Kasza (Area 21), Cameron Ells (Contest Chair, Division D Director)



Area 21 Evaluation Speech Contest held on Oct 17, 2015. **From left to right:** Ralph Smith and Karen Caldwell of Sears-Halifax Toastmasters



Area 21 Evaluation Speech Contest held on Oct 17, 2015. **From left to right:** Suzanne MacCrae (East Toasters @ ADP), Chris Kasza (Wolfville Toastmasters), Karen Caldwell (Sears-Halifax Toastmasters)

Meet the Members

Meet Rick Joseph, DTM



I have had the privilege of being a Toastmaster and member of the Sears-Halifax Club since May of 2000. Like most people, when I joined the club I had a real dread, if not terror of public speaking.

However, I had just taken a position of Executive Director of the then Nova Scotia Environmental Industry Association. This was a position that often had a high public profile and certainly a need to communicate with corporate members and national and international groups.

The Toastmasters training helped me to build confidence in speaking before audiences, both small and large. Probably one of the most exciting and terrifying early occasions was being asked to speak before over 300 delegates, on behalf of the Nova Scotia delegation, at the opening ceremonies of the 2001 Caribbean Water and Wastewater Conference in the Bahamas. The platform included the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, a very eloquent off-the-cuff speaker, and half of the Cabinet members. During my talk, part of the sound equipment fell off the lectern, but I managed to keep going and no one really noticed the mishap. The butterflies were kept in formation that night, and I was really grateful for the lessons I had learned at Sears-Halifax.

I think the most rewarding thing for me at this stage of my Toastmasters career is seeing new members come into the club with great fear and trepidation, and within a short period of time seeing them grow in confidence and speaking ability. Now in semi-retirement, I still value and use the speaking skills and leadership training Toastmasters has provided.

Meet Erna Slingloff, ACB, ALB



I joined Toastmaster in September of 2000. I joined because I was shy, feared speaking in public and wanted to gain confidence. Toastmasters has enabled me to gain all my goals and more. I have come from being a shy, timid speaker to a confident speaker. Over the year, I have learned to organize my thoughts and confidently speak in public when I need to.

Toastmasters has enabled me to advance in my career. Since I joined, I have participated in both Humorous Speech Contests and Speech Evaluation Contests. I have provided training to groups of 15 – 20 people at my workplace, and just two years ago, I stood in front of about 250 friends and colleagues of my sister's, and delivered a eulogy of her. Although this was a very trying time for me, I learned, through Toastmasters and my fellow members, how to deal with my emotions, and I delivered honour to my sister.

I will always be grateful to Toastmasters and my fellow members for their support while I gained my confidence. I no longer fear speaking in public.

Meet Ralph Smith, ACB, ALB

There are two things I never like to disclose to Toastmasters. First, my age and second, how long I have been a member of Toastmasters. The first is for obvious reasons, but the second requires an explanation, so here goes.

I have seen many members come and go over the years. Regardless of how long they stay, most have benefited from their experience. Many improvements in presentation skills were truly remarkable and probably resulted in advancement with their own businesses or careers. I have seen consistent “Ah Kings and Queens” change to never again achieve that dubious distinction. I have watched nervousness become unnoticeable. Many members whose first language is not English have become more understandable, and my hearing is not so acute anymore. Even smooth talking new members become even more polished.

This leads to my second non-disclosure; my time as a member. Whenever there is a break - like, over the summer - I lose a lot of the momentum I achieved during the previous session. I am still often the “Ah King”, and I still experience discomfort in getting up to speak. So, I really don’t want to admit that I am still not cured, after all these years.

And there are the other objectives of Toastmasters: Leadership, for example, which I would say includes parliamentary procedure. Members have learned how to run meetings that they never had the opportunity to do before. Robert’s Rules of Order are commonly accepted, and they work, and that is what Toastmasters teaches.

In conclusion, Toastmasters has helped me improve my “Ah” problem, but not eliminate it. It has helped me get up and speak before a group, but I still need to practice. But these are not the only reasons for coming back. It’s really interesting to see people improve, and then there’s opportunity to give back a bit. And, last but not least, the club has always had wonderful people to work and socialize with.

“There are three things to aim for in public speaking: first, get into your subject, then get your subject into yourself; and lastly, get your subject into the heart of your audience.”

Alexander Gregg

Upcoming Events: Club 60th

Club 60th Anniversary Update

In February 1955, Sears-Halifax Toastmasters Club began its meetings and activities.

In February 1956, our club received its Charter signed by Ralph Smedley.

In February 2016, our club will complete its 60th year of activity.

Imagine Saturday February 27, 2016:

- Ballroom setting, with white-covered tables for 90 people;
- Screen, lectern, microphones and more;
- Our banners and decorations, with a nicely printed program at each seat;
- Club members, their guests, Toastmasters from other clubs, interested others;
- Welcome table, event tickets and an online registration payment option;
- Big screen with looping audio-visual clips, photos and more;
- Delicious buffet dinner, and a temporary cash bar in the room;
- 10-minute broadcasted salute from Toastmasters International President, Jim Kokocki;
- Salute to our Club history from District, Division, Area and Club officials;
- The Club President's speech, and;
- The keynote after-dinner speech by Joe Grondin.

Joe Grondin - Draw Your Masterpiece; Draw Your Masterpiece - Joe Grondin

Joe Grondin is a retired school principal from Moncton, New Brunswick. He is also a 2010 and 2015 finalist in the Toastmasters World Speaking Championship (International Speech Competition).

At the November 2015, District 45 Conference, Joe gave an Educational Program speech on preparing a winning speech. Unfortunately, his less-than-scheduled available time meant that he gave only part of that very well-received speech. On February 27, 2016, at the Sears Halifax Toastmasters 60th Anniversary Banquet, Joe will give the full speech, and more. This will be a timely presentation, at the beginning of contest season, by a speaker whose international speech last year went from Moncton to the finals in the World Championship. Given by an educator, Joe's style and content will be a benefit for members at every level of Toastmasters experience.

In Joe's words: *"Like any artist trying to create a masterpiece, so does a speaker when trying to create a speech. Whether an artist or a speaker, one must answer these questions to help create that masterpiece: What is my message? What stories do I want to tell? How will my masterpiece be memorable? How will I connect with my audience on an emotional level? How will I adjust with feedback?"* This keynote address will help speakers develop their inner artists to create a masterpiece for any audience.

Leadership Development

How to make yourself work when you're not in the mood

Procrastination affects everyone. It sneaks up on most people when they're tired or bored, but for some, procrastination can be a full-fledged addiction. They avoid all day the work that is right in front of them, only to go home and toil late into the night, frantically trying to finish what they could have easily completed before dinner.

"Procrastination is the thief of time, collar him."
—Charles Dickens

With the holidays approaching, the high season for procrastination is upon us. It's even more difficult to get work done when you're stuck at the office, wishing you were enjoying time with family and friends.

Still, the procrastination cycle can become crippling at any time of the year, which is troubling, because recent studies show that procrastination magnifies stress, reduces performance and leads to poor health.

Psychologists at Case Western Reserve University conducted an interesting experiment where they offered college students a date range instead of a single due date for their papers. The researchers tracked the date that students turned in their papers and compared this to their stress levels and overall health. Students who waited until the last minute to turn in their papers had greater stress and more health issues than others did. They also received worse grades on their papers and in the class overall than students who turned their papers in earlier.

A study published earlier this year by Bishop's University explored the link between chronic procrastination and stress-related health issues. The researchers found a strong link between procrastination and hypertension and heart disease, as procrastinators experienced greater amounts of stress and were more likely to delay

healthy activities, such as proper diet and exercise.

Procrastination is fueled by excuses. We cannot expect to overcome procrastination and improve our health and productivity until we're able to overcome the negative mental habits that lead us to procrastinate in the first place.

What follows are the most troubling excuses we use to help us procrastinate. They're troubling because they're the most difficult excuses to conquer. For each, I offer preventative strategies so you can overcome procrastination and get productive, even when you don't feel like working.

"I don't know where to begin."

Paradoxically, we often find ourselves frozen like a deer in headlights when confronted with a difficult task. As well, much like deer, the best thing we can do is move in any direction, fast. When a task is particularly difficult, you need all the time you are given to complete it. There's no sense in wasting valuable time by allowing yourself to be overwhelmed by the complexity of the task.

The key here is to not allow fear of the whole to stop you from engaging in the parts. When something looks too difficult, simply break it down. What can you accomplish in 60 minutes that will help you slay the beast? Then, what can you do in 60 more minutes?

Breaking your task into shorter periods (where effort is guaranteed) allows you to move out of the "deer in headlights" frame of mind. Before you know it, you've accomplished something, and the task goes from way too hard to absolutely doable. When it comes to challenging tasks, inactivity is the enemy.

"There are too many distractions."

For most of us, getting started on a large project is a challenge. We stumble over all sorts of smaller, irrelevant tasks that distract us from

the real assignment. We answer emails, make calls, check the news online...anything to avoid the elephant in the room.

Being busy is not the same as being productive. When you find yourself avoiding a particularly sizeable task, slow down and visualize what will happen if you continue to put off the task. Distractions numb you by shifting your attention away from these consequences (a.k.a., away from reality). Reminding yourself of what will happen if you continue procrastinating is a great way to make distractions less enchanting so that you can focus on your work.

“It’s too easy.”

Tasks that are too easy can be surprisingly dangerous, because when you put them off, it’s easy to underestimate how much time they’ll take to complete. Once you finally sit down to work on them, you discover you have not given yourself enough time to complete the task (or at least to complete it well).

If a task is too easy, draw connections to the bigger picture, because these connections turn mundane tasks into a fundamental (and do it now) part of your job. For example, you might hate data entry, but when you think about the role the data plays in the strategic objectives of your department, the task becomes worthwhile. When the smaller, seemingly insignificant things don’t get done or get done poorly, it has a ripple effect that’s felt for miles.

“I don’t like it.”

Procrastination isn’t always about a task being too easy or too hard. Sometimes, you just don’t want to do it. It can be very hard to get moving on a task in which you’re disinterested, much less despise.

Unfortunately, there’s no foolproof way to teach yourself to find something interesting, because certain things will never draw your attention. Rather than pushing these tasks to the back of your plate, make it a rule that you cannot touch any other project or task until you’ve finished the dreaded one. In this way, you are policing yourself by forcing yourself to

“eat your vegetables before you can have dessert.”

When you do get started, you can always turn the task into a game. How can you achieve your task more efficiently? How can you change the steps of the process and still produce the same result? Bringing mindfulness to a dreaded task gives you a fresh perspective. The task itself might not be fun, but the game can be.

“I don’t think I can do it.”

You are assigned a new project by your supervisor. In fact, it’s one you’ve wished he or she would give you for a while. However, now that it’s in your lap, you simply cannot get started. You cannot get past thoughts of failure. What’s going to happen if I blow it? How am I going to do this? Could I be fired over this? It can reach a point where avoiding failure seems like the best possible option. After all, if you never engage in a project, you’ll never fail. Right?

Wrong. Procrastination itself is failure—failure to utilize your innate talents and abilities. When you procrastinate, you’re failing to believe in yourself.

Remember when you were learning to drive and you could only look straight ahead, because if you looked at something off the road, you’d unwittingly turn the wheel in that direction? Worrying about everything that might go wrong if you fail has the same effect. It pulls you toward failure.

You must shift your mind in a confident direction by focusing on all the positive things that are going to happen when you succeed. When you believe you can do something—and you visualize the positive things that will come from doing well—you equip yourself to succeed. This thought process gets your mind headed in the right direction. Worrying about everything that could go wrong only binds your hands. Break the chains and get started!

Bringing It All Together

Fighting procrastination teaches us to fully engage in our work, get more creative with it, and, ultimately, get more done.

How do you fight procrastination?

Culled from LinkedIn article written and published by Dr. Travis Bradberry, author of the book Emotional Intelligence 2.0



Using easy-Speak

Some of the challenges of being VP of Education are ensuring that meeting roles are filled and that members get credit for their participation in the Competent Leader and Competent Communicator education streams. The easy-Speak program makes the job much easier, and once members get the hang of it, it really gets a club meeting off to a smooth start.

Here are just a few features of the program that all members can use:

Manage the meeting on-line

At any time up to the cut-off for on-line changes (12 hours suggested), a member can click on the meeting detail to say “yes” or “no”.

If she or he has a particular interest in the meeting, they can request email updates as other members accept/refuse roles. (Don't forget to go to the top of the column and click the Save button.)

Manage a 'queue' of requested speeches

Members may book details of a speech ahead of time and request that it be scheduled in a future meeting. Speech details are shown automatically in the meeting agenda and in the personal record for the member. The queue of requested speeches is visible to all club members and to the VP of Education when preparing a meeting agenda.

A summary of speeches for each member and their progress towards their next designation (Competent Communicator etc.) is presented as one of the eight club charts on the site. The last fifty speeches for the club are also shown with a link back to the meeting at which they were made. To learn how to book a speech for a future meeting, visit: <http://easy-speak.org//kb.php?mode=article&k=45>

Manage and track members' progress toward leadership awards

The easy-Speak system allows the club VP of Education to record the date when a member completes each assignment and project leading to their Competent Leader and Advanced Leader awards. This information is also available to the member and their mentor.

If a member is assigned a meeting role that could be evaluated for their Competent Leader award, the member is provided with details and reminded by e-mail to bring their leadership manual to the meeting. For each meeting, a report is available to club officers showing potential Competent Leader roles, first-time roles and first-time visitors.

If the club uses easy-Speak for meeting management, information is collected automatically for meeting-based assignments. Competent leader tracking may also be enabled for clubs that chose not to use full meeting and data management through the site. To learn more about tracking leadership awards using easy-Speak, visit: <http://easy-speak.org/kb.php?mode=article&k=154>

- Rick Joseph, DTM, VP Education

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