



THE 1555'ER

Toastmasters

Club #1555

Sobeys Community Room,
287 Lacewood Drive
Halifax, NS B3M 3Y7
Canada

Winter 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message

A Guest from Qatar

Procrastination

Pathways 101

Toastmasters Fun

President's Message

Fellow Toastmasters,

Darwin said it best "Adapt or die!". Well, Sears Halifax Toastmasters certainly did adapt. With the demise of our ancestral home at Sears we made our fateful move one year ago. After 60 plus years at Sears we migrated to Sobeys Clayton Park. The move proved very beneficial and successful for our club. We achieved Presidents Distinguished Status along with many individual awards.



And now another year is upon us. A year that again will require adaptation as we transition into a full year of the Pathways program. I know Sears Toastmasters will embrace the change and fully meet the challenge.

I am honored to be entrusted with the role of President of this great club. And I look forward to working with each and every member to ensure a great educational experience.

Sincerely,
Mike MacDonald cc alb
President
Sears Halifax Toastmasters
Club 1555

A Guest From Qatar

On May 31st our club received a visit from Mallika Nair. She is a member of Indian Club Toastmasters in Doha, Qatar. She was kind enough to share her Toastmasters story with us:

How I found my voice!

Three years ago, I was on an exciting one hour sky ride from UAE. I was not alone, but accompanied by my cute little pet cat Zoe. We landed at the 3XL massive Hamad International Airport, which gave me a feeling that Qatar was a huge country, in total contradiction of my initial perception of Qatar being a tiny peninsular country! We both were warmly taken care of and given VIP treatment, in the most welcoming way! All the events and encounters during that Qatar Airways flight, and thereafter, gave me the most enjoyable feeling of a home coming of sorts.

Whatever came into my life, whatever crossed my path, were surprisingly the things I was always looking forward to. Destiny never looked better than this! I got a job in a newly established school, where I had the opportunity to set up many things for the first time, which includes a beautiful garden, a refreshing school magazine, and an IT lab. My job and the people around me gave opportunities to discover myself.

All my good memories, which I love to cherish, replayed again and again in a loop like a flashback. I love to put my thoughts to words, and like to see the past always as a series of enjoyable rides into my own world. I see commas as the speed limit signs and full stops as highway exits. Where one ride ends, another begins and the expedition continues.

One fine day, my friend Swati, a person with abundant talent in dramatics and public speaking, asked me to go with her to a toastmasters club meeting. I had never heard about toastmasters till then. But her description of toastmasters and what happens in their meetings was quite intriguing. So I decided to go along with her to Indian Club Toastmasters.

It was a warm Wednesday evening in September 2016. The club had their 280th meeting with theme 'SPEED. It was a houseful meeting, with most of the attendees in formal attire. The structured meeting proceedings grabbed my attention. In the introduction part, the Toastmaster of the day, Surya Narayanan showed a slide with a quote:

"IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE.

IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER"

I started thinking. Which one should I choose? I don't want to be alone and I need to go far too.... I'm not in a hurry and I like to have company. I instantly knew what I had to do.

One more thing I remember about that day is TM Murali Mohan's speech 'Brain-Freeze'. He spoke about his real life experience, but I could easily identify myself with it. I found the friendly 'feedback session' about each every speech very unique.

Overall it was a feel good experience for me. I made up my mind to join the club. Within a couple of days Ms. Mallika became TM Mallika.

Thereafter, I had a fantastic journey with Toastmasters! I even had the good fortune to attend the District Conference in May 2017. During this period, I was surprisingly recognized with a District PR award for my story writing. It has made me humble and inspired me work more passionately towards to my goals.

If your journey is comfortable, distance and time are not big issues. Our toastmasters journey begins once we become a member of a club and start attending regular meetings and gradually immerse ourselves by delivering speeches and taking up different roles. The club is like a training ground. Each of us is provided with a dedicated mentor who is committed to help and guide us in our journey. After joining toastmasters, I've learned the importance of evaluation and feedback in developing oneself. In toastmasters, evaluation is a blend of appreciation and friendly suggestions for improvement. They help us to understand the areas which we need to develop on. There's no Pass or Fail, nor is there any grading.

When I delivered my second speech, I ended up with this unusual feeling, "...How can I be so bad? My icebreaker was better than this! I should have postponed and practiced more".

I felt DREADFUL! I couldn't help feeling that I'd let down my audience, and... myself. But my evaluator and fellow members comforted and motivated me. More than me, they were confident that my next speech would be far better.

When I started exploring myself, I learned. Knowing oneself means respecting ones values in life. Your beliefs, your personality, your priorities, your moods, your habits. Understanding your strengths and weaknesses, your passions and fears, your desires and dreams and your tolerances and limitations. Once you get to know all these, you can speak from your heart!!

I had always been a person who loves to write more than speak. But after joining toastmasters I have realized that most writing is planned and can be changed via editing and revision before the audience reads it. And, writings get a delayed response.

On the other hand, public speaking is spontaneous in both delivery and audience response. There is no second chance and you can retract what is uttered. On the other hand, proficient speakers can measure the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings of their audience by their verbal and non-verbal reactions, right away during the live speech. The good news is, it is a skill that can be learnt and improved upon. I have decided to work more on my speaking and communication skills.

The most amazing thing which like in Toastmasters is, every member is uniquely talented. Each has his or her own goals to achieve, but all share deep commitment and passion to create a better understanding and appreciation of the world through better communication. They enjoy a journey together.

I believe, understanding your own personality is the first key to leadership. I saw, many inspiring and motivating leaders with their own unique identity in this year's club level speech contest. I feel abundantly proud to see my fellow members rock the stage.

Wow! Many confident and self-motivated leaders evolve every year. It's amazing!

The purpose of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers. My earlier concept about leader was 'a leader is only made so by his position.'

But, Toastmasters has taught me that 'whatever I am doing is part of my job and I need to excel in it to become a leader.'

Yes, I truly believe a toastmasters club is a place "Where Leaders Are Made" and I'm proud to be a toastmaster!!!

TM Mallika Nair

Procrastination by Ralph Smith

Toastmasters is a great place observe human behavior. We see the good things; people helping people and people helping themselves. Throughout my years at Toastmasters I have witnessed amazing changes in people who have improved their communication and leadership abilities. Some take longer than others; I am still working on mine after 20 years!

One of the reasons that I have taken so long is because of that human characteristic called procrastination. It's so easy to wait for the time to be right to do a talk on a particular subject, like procrastination, for example. So, instead of giving a speech about procrastination I will write about it here.

I am not the only one with this behavior. During my times as V.P. Education, I saw firsthand the effects of procrastination. It is usually in the form of not being able to deliver a speech that one has signed up for.

I do not want to discourage committing to speeches so I offer these tips to help overcome procrastination:

- Set yourself a deadline ... before the commitment date. Of course you will probably procrastinate until the commitment date but your chances of completion will improve.
- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works! This is the principle behind slimming and other self-help groups, and it is widely recognized as a highly effective approach
- If you're putting off starting a project because you find it overwhelming, break it into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks. Start with some quick, small tasks if you can, even if these aren't the logical first actions.
- Do not put off things that you should be focusing on right now, usually in favor of doing something that is more enjoyable or that you're more comfortable doing. Prime example of this is spending time on email especially on your hand held device.
- Avoid saying "Yes" to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do, and filling your time with these instead of getting on with the important tasks.
- Identify the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task.
- Promise yourself a reward for completing a task ... food, drink, sleep

In closing, here are some plagiarized quotations near and dear to the heart of all procrastinators:

- If it weren't for the last minute, I wouldn't get anything done.
- The two rules of procrastination:
 - 1) Do it today.
 - 2) Tomorrow will be today tomorrow.
- I do my work at the same time each day - the last minute.
- Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week.
- If you want to make an easy job seem mighty hard, just keep putting off doing it.

Pathways 101 by Mike Burfitt

After many years of the familiar Competent Communicator (CC) and Competent Leadership (CL) programs, the new pathways educational program was officially launched in our District on May 15th, 2018. The first questions many Toastmasters had were simple: “what exactly is pathways?” and “why is a proven program being changed so much?” It certainly doesn’t help that Base Camp, the platform on which Pathways is built has been criticized for being confusing, not user friendly and overall difficult to use for members new and old alike.

Just like changing from a typewriter to a computer, Pathways represents such a radical change to the Toastmasters curriculum that it would be nearly impossible to seamlessly transition to this new program. While on the surface Pathways appears to be very difficult to understand the truth is that it is simpler than it appears and represents a much-needed update to an educational program that hasn’t changed much since the 1970s.

Basically, it has changed from two parallel tracks: CC (Competent Communicator) and CL (Competent Leadership) to 10 different paths:

1. Dynamic Leadership
2. Effective Coaching
3. Innovative Planning
4. Leadership Development
5. Motivational Strategies
6. Persuasive Influence
7. Presentation Mastery
8. Strategic Relationships
9. Team Collaboration
10. Visionary Communication

Each path also contains 5 levels, which are composed of 14 total projects (10 required and 4 elective), all of which include at least one speech. They are:

- Level 1: Mastering Fundamentals
- Level 2: Learning Your Style
- Level 3: Increasing Knowledge
- Level 4: Building Skills
- Level 5: Demonstrating Expertise

Much like various branches of a tree, all paths begin with the same Level 1 to gradually move out into unique paths better tailored to the unique needs of each individual. Every Toastmaster has different reasons for joining a club and the Pathways program allows one to pursue an area of interest without first completing the CC manual.

Toastmasters Fun

Here is just a small sampling of our various activities throughout the year.



Club Officers 2018-19

Mike MacDonald

President

Shawn McIsaac

*Vice President –
Education*

Dianna Gentile

*Vice President –
Membership*

Mike Burfitt

*Vice President –
Public Relations*

Jaclyn Rankin

Treasurer

Robin Murray

Secretary

Russell Wnuck

Sergeant-at-Arms

