



# Sears Halifax Newsletter

June 2022

Sears-Halifax  
Toastmasters  
Club #1555

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**Toastmaster Leadership  
Institute TLI**  
June 2022

We meet every  
Thursday  
from 6:15 to 8:15pm

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## What has membership in Toastmasters meant to me?

- **Karen Caldwell, DTM**  
**President 2021-2022**



I bet every member in our club can look at this question and respond differently. For me, it has been an incredible journey of self-discovery. When I began Toastmasters 21 years ago, 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 grow as 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. 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 feel like an idiot. Yes, even people who are in sales for a living get spooked!

However, 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 throughout each meeting, I became more self-confident. It did not seem so bad to stand up and announce the “Ah King or Queen”. Table Topics became easier each time I participated. I realized that it was not the topic or the time that counted, but how I told the story.

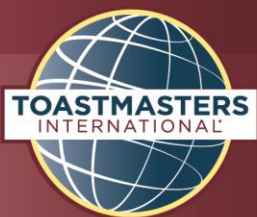
As I began presenting speeches and learning the techniques of how to give a great presentation, I realized that all I had to do was follow my project instructions, prepare, practice and then I could conquer “**FEAR**”.

Yes, each speech seemed like a form of punishment to test my intelligence and fortitude. That little *fear monger* kept sticking thoughts of failure into my mind. However, I kept asking myself ***why I joined Toastmasters***. The same answer 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, in weekly meeting roles, presenting table topics or 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 to become a more effective member of our club.



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## Meet the New Executives!

A warm welcome to our newest executive team members for the year 2022-2023:

**President:**  
Shawn McIsaac



**Vice President of Education:**  
Ashitha Nayak



**Vice President Membership:**  
(To be decided)



**Vice President Public Relations:**  
Sifiso Madonko



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**Secretary:**

Prasoon Pascal

**Treasurer:**

Marsha Greenan

**Sergeant at Arms:**

Patricia LeDrew

**Grey Weekends**

Prasoon Pascal



Have you noticed how most weekends turn out cloudy or rainy? Some weekdays are sunny and bright, but it starts getting grey on Friday evening. It is as if nature maintains a weekly calendar and almost knows Friday from Saturday!

I have often heard people say there are patterns in nature, and you just need to know how to read them. Sounds complex? It sure is! There is not, I believe, a faculty for this. The closest I can think of is perhaps metaphysics. Still, one cannot predict with certainty how nature will act on a given day. Forecast as good as you can, you will always end up with surprises. Uncertainty, especially in nature, has a charm that can sweep you off your feet...sometimes literally!

With the onset of spring, the shades of green I see all around is wonderfully

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diverse. If you would recall, the thick of winter brought two nights of icy rain with power outages in some parts. Icicles hanging from tree branches was artistic and a beautiful sight, but I wondered if those trees would ever bear leaves again. And happily, those very trees, some just right outside my window are now lush green. With summer opening its doors, I have started a list of places to visit. Cape Breton and Bay of Fundy are at the top. I am desperately hoping weekends turn out to be sunny and warm. However, it would be worth giving a try at utilizing those sunny weekdays because they may hold something memorable.

Like weekends, we often wait for that perfect time in life. Nevertheless, in due course, we miss those one-off sunny days that add up to bring that perfect event. Little moments, like that one sunny weekday ought to be lived, enjoyed and treasured. For we do not know what hue awaits us once the earth takes another turn.

## Well, That Happened!

**Tracy Gatis**

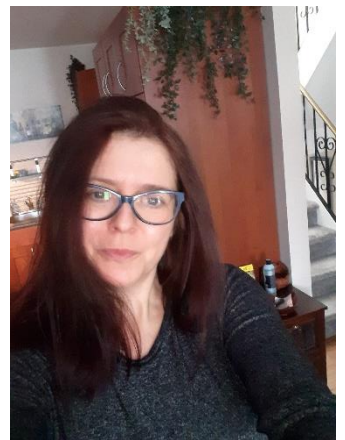
**Club Past President**

Let's start at the beginning. I wrote a funny speech about the toilet paper shortage as a joke, specifically for a set of girlfriends at an online club. Everyone in the world were stressed and I wanted to make them laugh and think about something else for at least one meeting.

Earlier this year, my work corporate club in Southern California had a speech contest and no one was participating. To be helpful, I offered to do that funny speech hoping members would be inspired to join in, at least it could be a great demonstration of what a contest looks like and maybe I could make them laugh. After all, the toilet paper issue wasn't just in Canada!

We did the contest. I was the only competitor, and was moved forward to the next level of competition – "The Area 02 level contests". Now I was committed!

There was a lot of PR around this at work cheering me on, so there was no way to get out of it!



Two weeks later, I attended the Area contest. I really wasn't sure how this speech would go over, remember it was made for an informal friend setting and I knew it pushed the envelope to be sure. I use a virtual background in this speech of sitting on a toilet. It literally looks like I am sitting on a toilet. I show frustration at a family member leaving an empty roll, I talk about the history of toilet paper and what people used before it was invented, I demonstrate different ways to load TP onto your hands to conserve the squares, throwing around iceberg and romaine lettuce as TP alternatives and flushing the toilet when I'm done. Definitely NOT approved content for the 'old-school' Toastmaster judges I was used to. They might ban me

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from competition! Turns out, they *enjoyed* it well enough! I won **1<sup>st</sup> place** at that Area contest. Next up was the Division level contests, 3 weeks later. I won that one too. *Uh oh....!!*

For the first time in my life, I was coming face to face with participating in a speech contest at a District conference. Thank goodness, it wasn't an in-person conference, there is something to be said for being able to hide behind your computer screen!

The day came and I was ready. A fresh head of romaine and iceberg lettuce were in the fridge. Another batch of toilet paper rolls, full and empty, were poised and ready to go in my office. I had my microphone set up, my bathrobe on and the sound effects poised on my phone for flushing the toilet at the end. I went to log in a bit early, to ensure I got in successfully and... my computer decided for the first time ever, to block a zoom meeting link. *OH NOOO!* Part of me panicked. Part of me was relieved. What to do? There was no Zoom meeting number typed in the email, so if the link didn't work, it seemed I was off the hook!

Yayy! Then, the guilt enveloped me. Guilt about all those members at work, cheering me on and so excited that our ADP Corporate club was represented. The guilt won, I decided to try one more thing to resolve the Zoom link "danger" my PC was blocking. After copy/pasting the link into a Word document and saving it on my PC, suddenly the Zoom window opened, and I was joining a group of several hundred Toastmasters as they were walking through the agenda of the day. *< sigh >* Alas, my opportunity to walk away was missed.

The contest start time arrived and I spoke 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 5 contestants for the **Humorous Speaking Contest**. Time to put on a silly face and have fun with it!

On May 7, 2022, I won **1<sup>st</sup> place** at that **District 12 Humorous Speech contest**. Yes, you read that right, a DISTRICT level competition. That's a first and it wasn't even something I had set out to do.



***Imagine what YOU could do if you tried...***

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## The Dynamics of Table Topics Contests

Shawn McIsaac

*"Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."*  
—Neale Donald Walsch

Contests can be fun but also a bit complex, not to mention having to put oneself outside of that pesky comfort zone. You certainly have to think on your feet. There is only a few seconds between getting the topic and then launching into it.

I have had the honor of representing our club at both the Area and Division levels in International, Humorous and Evaluation contests. Table Topics prior to this year, I had not. A new challenge! To me, speaking coherently on little notice is an extremely worthwhile skill to develop. Opportunities to do so will come up much more frequently than delivering a prepared speech. From the viewpoint of an observer, a Table Topics Contest might seem like something one shows up to do, tries their best, and hopes for a good outcome.



Being the competitive type, I take it a step further.

First, I participate in Table Topics on a regular basis, as that gives exposure to lots of weird and fun questions. Next, I practice on my own. Just one or two a day, to see if I can formulate something reasonable. I personally find the simplest questions to be the hardest.

What is your favourite color?

Describe a perfect vacation.

What is your favourite food?

Who inspires you?

The final component to preparation is ensuring my schedule is cleared, I sleep well, and have good food intake with only moderate caffeine for the day of the contest.

Alas, once that question comes, I try to simply pick one idea and run with it; keeping one eye on the lights and then finishing with a strong wrap-up. It was a tremendous experience to participate in this contest. I did what I could and will take the 2<sup>nd</sup> place showing at the Division. It will likely be my last contest for quite some time though as I shift focus. I strongly encourage you to participate in contests and lean on your mentor for help. It is another step towards growing as a fluid and dynamic speaker.

Maybe **YOU** will be our next club representative!

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## Thoughts of our beloved Secretary

**Ralph Smith**

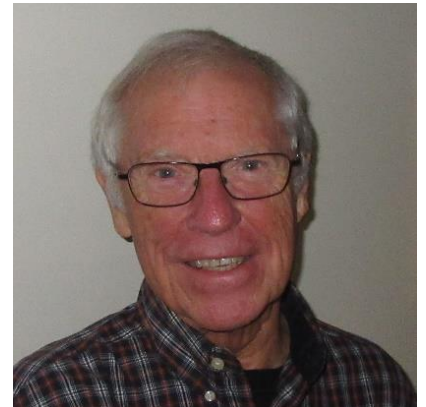
**Club Secretary**

Another Toastmaster year is winding down. As your outgoing secretary, I recorded member achievements, and awards along with the club's routine business. These minutes have been recorded on the club website since 2002 and are available to club members.

As a former executive, I have been V.P. Education; *in the dark ages*, when everyone did not have an email address. I remember many times making phone calls begging people to do speeches or take on roles. This is no longer necessary, thanks to email and the easy-Speak system and enthusiastic membership. I trust this same level of enthusiasm and commitment will be carried forward to our new V.P. Education.

It is impressive to see so much enthusiasm toward achieving designations. Once you get involved with the Pathways program, you will appreciate all of the work that went into its design.

To support new executives, there is always Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) this year via video conferences during June and the attendees can choose from a choice of several different dates. Again, speaking from experience these sessions are invaluable to both new and returning executives. I have always come away from these friendly and informative meetings, even online, with new ideas and motivation. Attendance also counts toward the Distinguished Club Program.



Thanks to my fellow Toastmaster members and executives this year for support and cooperation. Our new, motivated executive coupled with the robust membership roster will ensure continuation of educational and entertaining meetings.

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## Benefit of Toastmasters to Corporations

Chart showing the benefit of Toastmasters to corporations. To be printed out and handed to Human Resources representatives, used at tradeshow, etc.

*"If you can speak, you can influence, if you can influence you can change lives."*

—Rob Brown

### FEATURES, BENEFITS AND VALUE



Features	Benefits	Value to the Individual	Value to the Organization
▶ A self-paced program	▶ Flexibility	▶ Unlimited personal growth	▶ Employee goal achievement
▶ Speech writing and presenting	▶ Critical thinking ▶ Effective presentation delivery	▶ Clear communication ▶ Confidence	▶ Effective employee communication ▶ Better leaders
▶ Weekly interactive meetings	▶ Ongoing experience ▶ Overcoming fears	▶ Skill reinforcement	▶ Improved morale ▶ Enhanced performance
▶ Table Topics®	▶ Thinking quickly	▶ Self-confidence	▶ Better customer communication
▶ Evaluations	▶ Keen listening skills ▶ Constructive feedback	▶ Increased self-awareness ▶ Positive mentoring	▶ More productive teams
▶ Participation in meeting roles	▶ Ease in front of a group	▶ Improved leadership skills	▶ Effective meetings
▶ Opportunity to conduct meetings	▶ Time management skills ▶ Self-confidence and poise	▶ Effectively lead meetings	▶ Increased productivity
▶ Small groups	▶ A supportive environment ▶ A positive atmosphere	▶ Relationship-building	▶ Better teamwork ▶ Improved retention
▶ Opportunity to fulfill officer roles	▶ Leadership development opportunities	▶ Leadership growth ▶ Career advancement	▶ Better leaders
▶ Affordable dues	▶ Cost effectiveness	▶ Positive return on investment	▶ Positive return on investment

Rev. 3/2017

Item FBV100

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## How Toastmasters has helped me

### - Karina Sanford

Toastmasters was always something that I wanted to join. I wanted to grow in my speaking skills. I have learned and experienced so much more since becoming a member of Sears Toastmasters Club just over four years ago.

Toastmasters has helped me to become a seasoned speaker with confidence, clarity, organization, intention, vocal variety, gestures and passion. I also love all of the friendships I have made and the experiences I have had.

I am Karina Sanford, mom of two awesome kids, wife to my husband Tim, daughter, sister, an entrepreneur, business owner, politician, community leader, volunteer, friend and Toastmaster. I love **living life to the fullest**. I love experiencing new things. I love to learn and grow.



Having competed in several Toastmasters contests and winning I have come to understand the importance of organizing, preparing and practicing for speech presentations. It is such a great asset to receive constructive feedback from our fellow Toastmasters after we speak so we can get better. My favorite part of our Sears Toastmasters meeting is Table Topics because I think learning to think on your feet quickly and articulate your thoughts into a 1-2 minute speech is a skill you can use in so many areas of your life.

If you have not attended a Sears Toastmasters meeting yet as a guest, I believe you should, you will be so glad you did!

Can we count on it?

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## Summer Bucket list Ideas!

- **Ashitha**

**VP of Membership/Public Relations**

There is something about summer that just brings the *life* out of us, isn't there? Well, those sun-filled, warm-breeze days are here with us yet again (thank goodness) and of course, you will be looking for fun summer activities and things to do.

Besides sunbathing, walking around in those cute sun dresses and letting the sand run through your toes there are several other fun ideas to add to your summer bucket list.

### 1. **Walk on the Ocean Floor at Burntcoat Head Park – Noel**

With the tide's fluctuation in Nova Scotia, it is possible to walk at the ocean floor. If you plan to visit [Burntcoat Head Park](#), the beach is really the ocean floor that you can explore.



### 2. **Click a selfie with the Cow Bay Moose – Cow Bay**

[The Cow Bay Moose](#) is a 12 foot concrete sculpture of a moose created by Winston Bronnum. It appeared in 1959 and quickly became a local favorite. The moose has made an appearance in the "Trailer Park Boys".



### 3. **Visit Oak Island – Oak Island**

[Oak Island](#) is known for the treasure that may or may not be buried on the island. Since the 19th century, a number of attempts have been made to locate treasure and artifacts on the island. The island is privately owned, but there are tours that will take you around and on the island.

### 4. **Dempsey Corner Orchards – Aylesford**

[Dempsey Corner Orchard](#) is a fifth generation family-run farm in the Annapolis Valley. The farm-themed playground is fun for kids, and you can visit the petting zoo where you can see calves, goats, sheep, bunnies and kittens. You can discover many varieties of fruit and see a working farm in progress.



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## 5. Go Camping with East Coast Glamping – Hammonds Plain

Who says going camping means roughing it? [East Coast Glamping](#) rents camping equipment and accessories that makes sleeping under the stars extremely comfortable. They can create custom glamping packages for your camping needs and wants.



## 6. OnTree Fun & Adventure Park – Martock



Climb high in the tree at the first high rope course in Nova Scotia at [OnTree Fun & Adventure Park](#). The Park was designed and built to be exciting and fun for all ages and abilities. There are 18 courses that you can pick from along with 45 zip-lines and a 45-foot base jump.

## 7. Cape Breton Highlands National Park – Cape Breton

The [Cape Breton Highlands National Park](#) will take you up mountains and down into valleys. There are many scenic look-offs and places to stop and rest. There are 26 walking trails and 6 beaches in the park that are ready for you to experience..



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## 8. Digby Scallop Days

[Digby Scallop Days](#) is a 4-day celebration that takes place during the second weekend of August. This festival reflects on the local scallops and the fishermen who harvest them. Scallops from Digby, the Scallop Capital of the World, are known worldwide for their unique and succulent taste.

## HAPPY SUMMER !!!

Thank You for Reading!  
**Published by: Ashitha Nayak**  
Vice President – Membership/ Public Relations

