

The Orator

Volume 2

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The Journey to be the Best Damn Club on the Planet!

Simone Morris, Editor

These are exciting times for the Greater Stamford Toastmasters Club. Meetings have been averaging 25 or more members and we're learning a great deal from the clever speeches delivered by our fellow Toastmasters. Come on out and get inspired if you haven't been to a meeting in a while. We're well on our way to being the "Best Damn Club on the Planet," a phrase coined by our President. During the coming months, look for various events focused on helping us reach that goal.

We recently won the Smedley Award. This award is given to clubs that bring in five new members between August 1st and September 30th. Look for the Smedley Award ribbon attached to our banner. In fact, you should notice a few other ribbons on that banner.

In this edition, you'll hear our President talk about the latest initiative for driving membership up to the 100 mark. Also, we've added a winner's circle focusing on the high caliber of Toastmasters in our club. We hope you enjoy this issue and can always use more volunteers. See you next edition!

President's Corner:



*James Jorasch, President, GSTM
2003-2004 Term*



Drive for the Century

Greater Stamford Toastmasters continues to set records for membership growth. This March we have gone over the 80-member mark, probably for the first time in the more than 50-year history of the club. District officers recently confirmed that we are far and away the largest of the 120 clubs in District 53 (all of CT, Western MA and Eastern NY).

Where do we stand among the nearly 10,000 Toastmasters clubs in the world? According to TMI, probably in the top 20 or so. Is that good enough for us? Of course not! The officers of the club decided to push for more than 100 members by June 30 (the end of the term for officers). Breaking 100 should make us #1 or within a stone's throw of #1, so we are going to go for it!

To this end, we have unveiled the Drive for the Century, a membership drive that should get us over 100 members. Members who bring in 3 or more new members will earn bonuses such as extensions to their memberships or gift certificates. The person

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who brings in the most new members will get \$50 in cash. So how can you help out in the Drive for the Century?

- Talk about Toastmasters with your friends or co-workers. Let them know what we offer and encourage them to stop by as a guest. Are they a very nervous speaker? Encourage them to attend one of our Beginner's Nights.
- Let the officers know your ideas for reaching prospective new members. Do you know someone who works for a newspaper that might be willing to do a story on the Stamford Club? Do you know of an event where we could set up a small booth and talk about Toastmasters? All of these are terrific ways to bring in new members.
- The most important way that you can help is to participate in our regular club meetings and make the club experience as productive and fulfilling as possible for all members. A room filled with enthusiastic Toastmasters can only mean that we are bound to succeed in anything we set our minds to!

So watch out for updates from Ed Carroll and myself regarding this drive. We will give you regular updates as to how close we are to the goal, and will publicize the names of those members leading the standings in the contest.

Together we can make this the best damn club on the planet – join us for the Drive for the Century!

Youth Leadership Program: A Partnership between Academy of Information Technology & Greater Stamford Toastmasters

Raj Rawal is currently a CTM and works as a Technology Computer Consultant.



Greater Stamford Toastmasters Club has helped the young people of today become leaders of tomorrow through the Youth Leadership Program (YLP) offering at the Academy of Information Technology (AIT) located at Rippowam Center in Stamford. YLP was an eight-week program in the fundamentals of oral communications and leadership.

Toastmasters International developed the YLP class specifically for young people. The program uses materials especially adapted for youth from the regular Toastmasters International public speaking program. YLP offered young people the opportunity to learn tools for effective speaking, analytical listening and critical thinking. It also provided practice in properly conducting a conference or a meeting.

Ed Carroll and I approached the staff at AIT for starting the YLP in late 2003. Since the start of the program in February 2004, a 1.5-hour session every week has been coordinated for 14 students in the 10th grade. As expected, the class started slow with areas of

concern about the real interest of the students. As expected, it proved to be quite the challenge to focus the energy and attention of energetic 10th graders. The training at Toastmasters allowed us to step up to the challenge.

Regardless, the results in the first half of the program were very encouraging. Because the sessions were actually led by students, the election of new officers for the second half of the program was a much more sought after role compared to the first half. Seeing the students improve their speaking, table topics, and evaluation skills over the weeks was certainly heart warming. The good news is that the school administrator has asked to expand the YLP to many more students. The feedback from the students as well as the teacher has been very positive.

The sessions thus far have included several guest speakers from our club. James Jorasch, Jesse Baker, and Al Bhatt have graciously volunteered their time and expertise in presenting to the students. Similarly, opportunities will be available for more members to help as we continue to expand YLP in local schools. If you are interested in offering YLP at another school, Ed and I are available to share with you our ideas, experiences; lesson plans, and even helps you get started by providing the opportunity to audit a session.

To wrap up the 8-week YLP sessions, there was a special celebration session held during week 9. Each student was presented with a certificate of completion with invited school staff members and parents. Several of the students gave speeches in front of a larger audience showcasing their improved communication and leadership skills; a necessary capability of today's leaders.

Identity Theft

Judy Borderud is a Personal Financial Organizer. She is currently pursuing her CTM.

Imagine if someone assumed your identity and purchased large items in your name, leaving you with fraudulent purchases, bad credit history and debt! Identity Theft is a growing crisis in the world. Fellow Toastmasters, it doesn't discriminate. 7-mil. people in the US were victims last year.

If you feel you have been a victim, there are several things that you can do.

1. Immediately notify the police department and file a report.
2. Keep records of all of your correspondences.
3. Notify your bank, credit card companies. Don't pay fraudulent charges. Be firm!
4. Notify the three credit reporting bureaus by phone or on the Internet.
 1. Equifax 1.880.525.6285
 2. Experian 1.888.397.3742
 3. TransUnion 1.800.680.7289

Valuable tips for preventing ID theft are:

- Order your credit-bureau reports annually
- Keep copies of front and back of credit cards and driver's license in a safe place.
- Don't carry social security card with you.
- Check bank statements thoroughly every month.
- Use shredder to dispose of credit card offers, old receipts and financial records.
- Use the Post Office or official mailboxes for outgoing bills.
- Don't fall for anything that sounds too good to be true.

Staying the Course

Simone Morris recently completed requirements for CTM and works as a Technical Project Manager.

Fellow Toastmasters, I got a warm reception when I delivered my CL10 speech. The goal of the CL10 is to inspire the audience. Based on your feedback, I felt successful and want to continue to inspire you to reach your goals.

Do you know where you are going? If you don't have directions or a plan, it's going to be very hard to get to your destination. Are you just charging ahead to reach your CL10 without thought of available paths (see Figure 1 below) or plans of how you can implement these learnings in your personal and professional life?

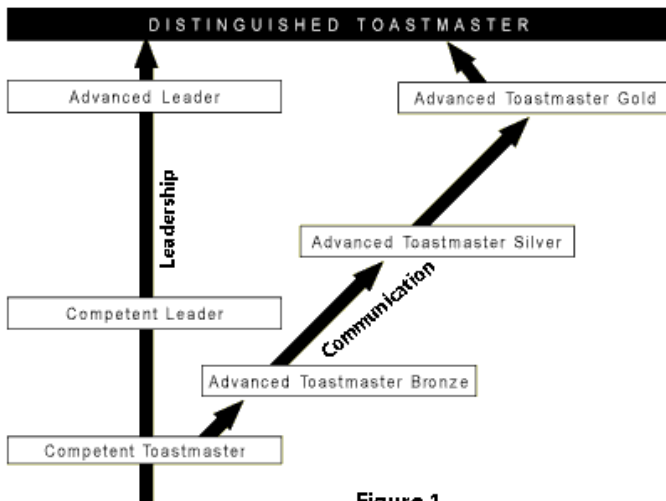


Figure 1

If so, I would encourage you to stop and take heed of where you are in the process. Additionally, the following are tips on regaining focus should you become uninspired while you are aiming for whichever level you aspire to be in the Toastmaster organization.

- Secure a mentor. The relationship is worthwhile. Believe me, I've been there.
- Tap into workshops to focus on eliminating problem areas.
- Volunteer for a role. This forces you to constantly speak in front of an audience.
- Create a plan. Sign up early for speeches. Our membership has increased significantly so sign up for speeches online. It saves time.
- Evaluate successful peers. I don't know about you but I was truly inspired by the club's performance at the Debate. I've set a challenge goal for myself to participate when the next opportunity for a debate presents itself.
- Weekly quotes inspire us to keep our focus. Eleanor Roosevelt said "I believe that anyone can conquer fear by doing the thing he fears to do." Does this inspire you? It inspires me.

Member Spotlight



Congratulations to Melanie Szlucha for her recent win in the Division D International Speech Contest. She will be competing in the District Contest at the

Spring conference on May 22nd in Windsor. The District level represents about 120 Toastmasters clubs from all of Connecticut, Western Massachusetts, and Eastern New York.



Membership News

- In order to help our club reach our DCP status this year (ends June 30th), we need members to reach their CTM, ATM (B, S, G) and DTM designations. As a result, a special themed meeting was held on Monday, April 19th, 2004, called "Race to the Finish". Preferential treatment for speaking slots will be given those members who are reaching one of the aforementioned designations. Our goal is to have at least two designations awarded that evening.
- Division D International Speech & Tall Tales Contests hosted by (Area D2) Greater New Haven Toastmasters & Yale Toastmasters was held on Tuesday, March 30, 2004. Hip Hip Hooray to **Melanie Szlucha** who won that contest. Say congratulations to Melanie the next time you see her and wish her well as she gears up for the next contest.
- Table Topics Talent - Last newsletter you read about **Paul Bailo** taking second place at the District level Table Topics competition. But he had better be looking over his shoulder, because a couple club members are moving up fast. **Norton Hazel** stopped by the club recently and answered a table topics question about his first car. His story of being pulled over for speeding had the audience in stitches – the speech had drama, excellent gestures, terrific vocal variety, and as passionate a delivery as we have seen in a long time. Quite a package! Another rising star is **Andrew Mouradian** who has taken first place in the last three table topics sessions he has been involved in. He combines the manic physical comedy of the Three Stooges with the clever wordplay of Groucho Marx. Norton and Andrew are both members to watch out for!
- Stamford Comedy Workshop was held on March 10th. A dozen of us hardy comedy fans got together for two hours of Improvisational comedy games. The group ranged from beginners to experts, but this month saw some very strong performances by the newbies **Asgar Rouhani and Anthony Miano**. Another participant was **Bernie Kettle**, a senior member of Stamford Toastmasters who hasn't been to the club in awhile. We also welcomed members from two other TM clubs in our area, Gilda Bonanno (from Purdue Pharma) and Phebe Ong (from GE Capital). Even the elusive Geoff Gelman stopped by! Send email to comedy@stamfordtoastmasters.com to get on the email list.
- Inter-Club Debate February 2004 saw the inauguration of a new annual event - the Stamford vs. Norwalk debate contest. The topic was "Outsourcing Labor to Foreign Countries - For or Against". Stamford argued "for" while Norwalk took the "against." Stamford fielded a strong team and ultimately prevailed to win the competition. Congratulations to team members **Al Bhatt, Paul Bailo, and Lorri Jongeneel**. **Dean Etienne, Paul Stewart, and Mike Stevenson** represented Norwalk. In a preliminary event, **Geoff Gelman and Paul Campilli** won an impromptu debate with the topic of "Surveillance Cameras in Public Schools."
- Spring Speech Contest - For our 2004 International Speech & Tall Tales Contest, we had a packed house of both members and guests. This year's contests featured both veteran and virgin contestants alike. In the International Contest we had **James Jorasch, Melanie Szlucha, Joy Van Hemert, and Jeremy Ulrich** competing. Melanie took top honors while James snuck into second place.
- The Tall Tales Contest saw **Russell Kenny, John Anello, and James Jorasch** competing. James' story of leading a cartoon team to go after Bin Laden topped the field this year. In second place was

John Anello in his first contest speech performance. One of the hardest working members of the Stamford Club (he gives a couple speeches every month), John is one to look out for in future competitions.

- Did you miss all the fun? Do you want to see the contest so you can determine how to beat certain individuals in our next contest? Check the 2004 Spring Club Contests tape out from our video library.
- Double Wednesdays in April! Due to the strong demand for our new Wednesday meetings (we had five speakers at the last one!), starting in April we will schedule them twice per month - mark your calendars for the first and third Wednesday of each month. Have some ideas for making these meetings better? Email Jamie Gerelli at wednesdays@stamfordtoastmasters.com.
- SPRING SOCIAL to be held on April 21st at Tidbits Restaurant on Bank Street in Stamford. Please save the date on your calendar. You will receive details via email or as always, please check the website www.stamfordtoastmasters.com for further details.
- VOLUNTEERS are needed for the 2004 Cancer Walk to be held Sunday June 6th at beginning from Cummings Park in Stamford. The walk will be 3 miles or 5 miles. Last year 3,000 people participated in the Walk. The goal is to raise \$5,000 for this wonderful cause. The overall goal of the organization is to raise \$550,000. If we can get a team of 25 Toastmasters walking with contributions of \$200/team member, we'd meet our goal. There's plenty of time to realize this goal. Please email Simone Morris at VP_Publications@StamfordToastmasters.com to indicate your interest.
- WANT TO BE A WRITER? Submit articles to The Orator Newsletter. Please email Simone Morris at

VP_Publications@StamfordToastmasters.com to indicate your interest.

- CALENDAR OF EVENTS - For updated event information, visit <http://www.stamfordtoastmasters.com>