

1946, 1948, 1953, 1975, 1981, 1986 twice, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2012, 2013. Of the five oldest clubs in District 35, three are in Northern: the oldest club in District 35 is La Crosse, chartered in 1946. Stevens Point, 1948. Wausau Morning Toastmasters, 1953. If you take the average of the years that the clubs chartered it is 1986. That's the year UWSP Toastmasters chartered. It's said that university clubs are hard to maintain. Club 6141 has maintained for 39 years!

For many, I am sure that Northern Division is seen as a group of small clubs scattered around the periphery of our larger metropolitan areas. If that's what you think, you are partially correct. Many of our clubs are remote from each other, separated from other clubs by distance, and many, many miles from Milwaukee and Madison, yet surviving in spite of small population centers. In fact, Toastmasters International suggests that many of our towns are too small to support thriving clubs.

Northern Division has had its share of difficulty this year, each area being affected by members' illnesses, hospitalizations, and broken bones. Yet, every club has had successes this year. Each club has found new members. Each club sent officers to training. Northern embraced in-person contests with gusto.

Will each club be distinguished? No, but each club has demonstrated growth. These clubs are resilient. The clubs matter to the members. How many times could La Crosse have given up in 79 years? They haven't.

I hope that you can all help me show appreciation to these members who keep these clubs whole. If you haven't noticed, I am terribly proud to have them as part of District 35. Are you?

Respectfully submitted

Rhonda Williams, Northern Division Director