

Fall District 35 Council Meeting  
September 14, 2024

Call to Order and Welcome – District Director Robert Wall

- The meeting was called to order at 09:01am
- Reminders that only voting delegates may participate in any discussion and vote
- Meeting officials:
  - o Timer – Immediate Past District Director Jason Feucht
  - o District Parliamentarian – Tom Rozga
  - o District Credentials Chair – Jim Vitrano

Review of the District Mission – District Director Robert Wall

Inspiration – Cindy Laatsch

- International Personal Development Association "Be a Do-Gooder" app
- <https://www.toastmasters.org/events/centennial/CentennialPledge>

Credentials Committee Report – Credentials Committee Chair Jim Vitriano

- Number of clubs in good standing = 78
- $X2 = \text{Total Club Presidents and Vice Presidents Education} = 156$
- Number of club votes required for a quorum ( $1/3$  of eligible clubs  $\times 2$ ) = 52
- Number of online voting members = 78
- QUORUM ACHIEVED
- Number of votes to equal 50% + 1 vote (simple majority) = 47
- Number of votes for  $2/3$  majority = 63

Voting Procedures – Parliamentarian Tom Rozga

- Votes will be taken by electronic poll

A motion was moved and seconded to approve the nomination of Nancy McCulley as Division C Director.

- Motion passed unanimously. Congratulations to Nancy McCulley

Approval of Spring 2024 District Council Meeting Minutes – District Director Robert Wall

- The minutes of the Spring 2024 District Council Meeting were published on the district website; no additions or corrections were made
- Minutes are approved as published

District Financial Report – Finance Manager Lisa Elz-Powell

- A written report was submitted and is included in the appendix
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget as published. Motion passed.

Audit Report – Audit Committee Chair Ed Thelen

- A written report was submitted and is included in the appendix
- Recommendations:
  - o Timeliness of monthly reporting
  - o Inconsistent financial reporting package
  - o Make sure we are spending our money

## Division Director Reports

- Division A – Susan Brushafer
  - o Written report submitted and included in the appendix
- Division C – Nancy McCulley
  - o Newly appointed, so no report at this time
- Division D – Liz Urban
  - o Written report submitted and included in the appendix
- Division E – Brandon Birrenkott
  - o Written report submitted and included in the appendix
- Division N – Rhonda Williams
  - o Written report submitted and included in the appendix

## Public Relations Report – Public Relations Manager DeDe Obuch

- Written report submitted and included in the appendix

## Immediate Past District Director Report – Immediate Past District Director Jason Feucht

- Written report submitted and included in the appendix

## Club Growth Director Report – Club Growth Director Yuriy Ksenidi

- Written report submitted and included in the appendix

## Program Quality Director Report – Program Quality Director Theresa Flynn

- Written report submitted and included in the appendix

## District Director Report – District Director Robert Wall

- Written report submitted and included in the appendix

## Unfinished Business – NONE

## New Business – NONE

## Announcements – District Director Robert Wall

- The next District Council Meeting will be held on May 3, 2025.
- Items for the May 3, 2025 District Council Meeting should be submitted to the District Director in writing by March 30, 2025

The meeting adjourned at 10:01am

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Marie Keating  
District Administrative Manager



**Lisa Elz-Powell**

2023-2025 District Finance Manager

District 35

email: [laelz@powellfamilywi.com](mailto:laelz@powellfamilywi.com)

9/14/2024

Good morning District 35 Toastmasters:

I am grateful to serve the District again as Finance Manager for the 2024/2025 fiscal year. I want to give a special thank you to last year's District Director, Distinguished Toastmaster Jason Feucht and to our current District Director, Distinguished Toastmaster, Robert Wall for their continued support.

The Trio has established a budget that will directly support the District Mission and goals as outlined in the District Success Plan. The District Success Plan was developed by the trio with input from the District Executive Committee.

Please note that District 35 does not fundraise or operate a District Store. Instead, our revenue is directly correlated to member dues paid to Toastmasters International. Toastmasters International also mandates that all districts follow specific guidelines for allowable expense percentages based on the type of expense.

Additionally, all District events, and the overall District must be budgeted to a net zero profit and loss. This requirement does not give the District any flexibility to leverage excess reserves to underwrite events such as the District Conference. Our budget for this fiscal year has been built to meet these requirements and constraints.

Despite these requirements, we feel this year's budget is set up to successfully support the District Mission, most importantly building and sustaining clubs.

On the positive side, due to all of your efforts to focus on the member experience over the last year, our budget is essentially unchanged from the 2023/2024 fiscal year. If we as a district, as club leaders and as Toastmasters continue to focus on the member, and their experience, District 35 will continue to grow. With a growing membership, revenues will increase giving us more resources to better support and further strengthen our clubs.

District Director Robert, at this time I move for adoption of the District 35 Budget as posted.

## **Financial Report**

Next our Financial Report.

First, I would like to thank the outstanding efforts of our Audit Committee, led by Audit Committee Chair, Distinguished Toastmaster and Past District Director Ed Thelen.

Financial Reports have been reconciled through June 30, 2024 and will be caught up by the October DEC meeting. Hence, the following information reflect financial reports as of June 30, 2024:

Checking Account Balance: \$30,760.16

District Reserve Balance: \$18,808.74

- Please note, \$7,543 of this amount must remain in reserve with Toastmasters International. This amount is calculated based on 25% of the projected revenue from member dues.

Total Available Funds: \$49,568.90

- This is \$6,974.97 more than the same time last year.

Total District Revenue: \$46,689.49.

- This is \$680.70 less than in June 2023.

District Expenses: \$30,884.59

- This is under budget by \$9,771.54

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Elz-Powell

2023-2024 District 35 Finance Manager

With this, the Financial Report has been presented.

Are there any questions?

Hearing none it will be filed for Audit.

	07/01/2023 Through 06/30/2024		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>District Revenue</b>			
Membership Revenue	30,172.15	30,179.89	(7.74)
Conference Revenue	16,517.34	15,000.00	1,517.34
<b>Total District Revenue</b>	<b>46,689.49</b>	<b>45,179.89</b>	<b>1,509.60</b>
<b>District Expenses</b>			
Conference Expenses	13,278.56	15,000.00	(1,721.44)
Recognition	(78.32)	2,250.00	(2,328.32)
Club Growth	(627.64)	3,800.08	(4,427.72)
Marketing Outside of Toastmasters Expenses	2,475.00	3,017.00	(542.00)
Public Relations Expense	1,944.95	2,100.00	(155.05)
Education & Training Expense	1,822.07	4,060.00	(2,237.93)
Speech Contest Expenses	916.96	1,200.00	(283.04)
Administration Expenses	1,791.07	2,000.00	(208.93)
Food and Meals Expense	2,194.33	2,709.65	(515.32)
Travel Expense	1,022.99	1,930.82	(907.83)
Lodging Expense	4,658.78	5,740.70	(1,081.92)
Allocation Expenses	1,485.84	1,371.84	114.00
<b>Total District Expenses</b>	<b>30,884.59</b>	<b>45,180.09</b>	<b>(14,295.50)</b>
<b>Total Net Income</b>	<b>15,804.90</b>	<b>(0.20)</b>	<b>15,805.10</b>



**Ed Thelen DTM, PDD**

2023-2024 Audit Committee Chair  
District 35

**District 35 Year-End Audit Report – District Council Meeting – 9/14/2024**

The District 35 audit committee met on Thursday, August 29, 2024. The audit committee is comprised of Chairperson Ed Thelen, DTM, PDD and members Mike Dill, DTM and Bethanie Gist, DTM. This report covers the period of January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024.

The committee reviewed the documentation for financial income and expenses for the period covered above with respect to the following areas: organization, substantiating transactions, and policy review.

Overall, the recordkeeping was very good with supporting documentation for all expenses. Policies that are routinely commented on (sales tax and authorization of \$500 transactions) have been followed appropriately. The work of Finance Manager, Lisa Elz-Powell, AAN is most appreciated.

The audit committee did notice the implementation of some items noted as recommendations from the mid-year audit report. An Excel format for the registers required to be provided for the audit was found, which allowed for cleaner and more flexibility in documenting the review of the necessary items for the audit. There were also an increased number of comments on the expense reports where the supporting documentation did not equal the reimbursement amount.

In the spirit of improvement that is a part of Toastmasters, the audit committee does have a few recommendations to implement/consider:

**Timeliness of Monthly Reporting** – As of mid-August, the audit committee only had information through March 2024. All reports should have been completed by this point. As a result, the audit committee meeting had to be scheduled within an extremely tight timeframe to complete the audit on time. While we try to be flexible, everyone's time needs to be respected. As I have agreed to continue as Audit Committee Chair for next year, I will work to put together a calendar to have flexible timelines for everyone.

**Inconsistent Financial Reporting Package Sent to World Headquarters and Audit Committee** – The reporting package (reports and supporting documentation) sent via email to the audit committee and World Headquarters varied from month to month. The detailed list of the reporting package will be re-sent to the District Finance Manager and Trio for this Toastmasters year.

**Make Sure We Are Spending our Money** – In reviewing the District Reserve statements, we noticed that, per Toastmasters policy, an \$8,623 allocation was made back to Toastmasters International in January for monies not used for the 2022-2023 Toastmasters year. This money is supposed to be for us – District leaders make sure you are carrying out budgeted programs and all of us make sure we are using our District Dollars.

Overall, District 35 is to be commended in its efforts to be financially sound and support the necessary policies for Toastmasters International to maintain its not-for-profit status.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Ed Thelen, DTM*

Ed Thelen, DTM, PDD  
2023-2024 Audit Committee Chair  
District 35



**Susan F. Brushafer**

2024-2025 Division A Director

District 35

email: [sfbdotw@charter.net](mailto:sfbdotw@charter.net)

9/14/2024

Good morning District 35 Toastmasters:

Division A got off to a show start this Toastmasters year. With four Areas to support, and only one Area Director assigned, I was grateful for the AD recruiting help I received from the Trio. Kudos go out to the three Area Directors who will be working with me this year.

I recruited Evelyn Hunter my first AD because I was impressed with her work when I was Area Director for her club. She is a first-time AD and will be serving Area A2. Ronda Borowski is a star. She not only took the role of AD for Area 1 but had all of her club visits scheduled within a week of accepting the position. Bonus to Sue Kohut. I had put out a request to the Division A DTMs, seeking their help with club visit and reports for Areas 3 and 4, which had no assigned ADs. Sue answered the call and volunteered to do five club visits. After a chat with District Director Robert, I approached Sue to take the Area Director role for Area 4. Sue accepted. Here's where Sue's bonus kudos come in: after accepting the AD role, she is moving forward with two of the original five she volunteered for, both of which are in Area 3. My final Kudo is to Rich Boomsliter. He is the other DTM who stepped up to do a club visit and report. He is covering one of the remaining clubs in Area 3; I will visit and do the reports for the other two clubs in that Area.

Our first Division A Council meeting took place on Wednesday, September 11. The next Division A Council meeting is scheduled for November 13. Along with the Area Directors, I invited the President, VP-Education, and VP-Membership from all Division A clubs.

Of the 19 clubs in Division A, AD visits have been so far scheduled for 16. Completed reports for four of those 16 clubs have already been filed with Toastmasters International.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan F. Brushafer, DTM  
2024-2025 Division A Director  
District 35





**Liz Urban, LD4**  
2024-2025 Division D Director  
District 35  
email: lizzy.vb10@gmail.com

9/14/2024

Good morning District 35 Toastmasters:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the District this year as Division D Director.

Division D has started off this year with great momentum.

Before I cover anything else, I want to thank the Division D Team:

- James White, Area D1 Director
- Ken Goltz, Area D2 Director
- We are still actively searching for our Area D3 Director and Area D4 Director

Thank you for taking time to serve your clubs, your areas, Division D and District 35 this year.

Division D currently has 323 members across 19 clubs. 3 clubs are at full strength of 20+ members (NM Speaks, Speak-on, Toast on Tap) 14 clubs have 12 or less members and are eligible for club coaches. I would like to thank the coaches working with clubs in Division D and encourage those clubs eligible for coaches to request one.

Overall while all clubs are working hard to meet the needs of their members, there continues to be a concern at all levels regarding membership, the commitment of members to renew and membership growth. I am very happy to report that Division D has gained 11 new members since the start of this Toastmaster Year. We are hopeful that membership overall will continue to rise.

We had a successful summer officer training session in Division D, All but 3 clubs had a minimum of 4 officers trained and 5 clubs had all 7 officers trained (Cream City Communicators, Oak Creek Toastmasters, CNH Industrial Toast Team, The Breakfast Club, and Resource Advanced Toastmasters Club). Thank you to all club officers for your dedication to your clubs and the members.

### **Education Awards**

At the time of this report's preparation, Division D has had 13 earned education awards. Congratulations to all of you! Keeping our members focused on their personal development, and growth through the education program is essential to our overall success and why we are here.



I encourage all Division D clubs to stay focused on the member and the member experience. Please reach out to your Area Director or I if you need assistance as we continue to make this Toastmaster year another year of growth and personal development.

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Urban, LD4  
2024-2025 Division D Director  
District 35



**Brandon Birrenkott**

2024-2025 Division E Director

District 35

email: Brandon.Birrenkott@sentry.com

9/14/2024

Good morning District 35 Toastmasters:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the District this year as Division E Director. This is my 3rd term as Division Director, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive term as Eastern Division Director.

The Division E team is off to a great start for this Toastmasters year. The Eastern Division/Area Director team will be meeting once per month for Division Council meetings (third Monday of each month at 4:30pm). I want to give recognition to the following 3 Area Directors within Eastern Division. These individuals are key to the Division due to their direct interaction with the clubs within Eastern Division.

- Aaron Lau (E1)
- Carol Mather (E2)
- Christa Vanderheiden (E3)

**Area Director Reports:** A total of 7 (Of 13 total or 54%) Area Director Club visits have been completed. This is a very nice result thus far. The goal is to complete 100% of Area Director visits for the first round of submissions by 11/30/2024, or sooner.

**CONCERN 1 with AD VISITS:** There are no immediate concerns in terms of Area Director visits. Club membership continues to be a strong emphasis for clubs.

**Club Officer Training for the first session:** A total of 11 of 13 clubs within Eastern Division have had at least 4 officers trained for the first 'go around' of TLI. The 2 clubs with less than 4 officers trained had 3 and 1 officers trained. A special recognition to the following clubs who had all 7 club officers trained during this last TLI/period:

Leading Voices (7 of 7)  
Thriving Communicators (7 of 7)  
Sheboygan Club 2121 (7 of 7)  
Sturgeon Speakers (7 of 7)

TLI/Club Officer Training is a very important component for the clubs and the club officers who serve their respective clubs.

**Membership numbers:** Division E currently has 169 members across 13 clubs, which represents an average of 13 members per club.

There are 9 Clubs who are at 12 or more members. Presently, I'm happy to report that 100% of the clubs (all 13) have at least 8 members. There are 2 clubs within Eastern Division with 20 members.

In terms of Club Officer reports, 12 of 13 clubs have their Club Officer listing on time/submitted.

## **Education Awards**

Since the start of the Toastmasters Year Division E has had 15 members earn education awards. This is very solid, since we're just about 2.5 months into the current Toastmaster's year.

Keeping our members focused on their personal development, and growth through the education program is essential to all our overall success and why we are here.

## **Distinguished Club Program**

There are 5 clubs that have already met at least 1 goal toward the Distinguished goals for the current Toastmaster's year. We're very early into the 2024-2025 Toastmaster's year, but kudos to the clubs who have met at least 1 goal thus far. I'm sure as we progress into the Toastmaster's year, we'll see more. Well done!

## **Conclusion**

Eastern Division is off to a very nice start for 2024-2025. I'm encouraged by the membership numbers, which seem to be higher than 2023-2024 (thus far) and I'm hoping that with continued support and encouragement from the District and the Area Director/Leadership team, Eastern Division will continue to do well.

I want to again give special thanks for the Area Director Team in Eastern Division (Aaron Lau, Paul Van Dyck and Christa Vanderheiden). We have met once already as a leadership team and have recurring calendar invites set up for the third Monday of each month at 4:30pm to meet as a Division (Division Council).

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandon Birrenkott  
2024-2025 Division E Director  
District 35



**Rhonda Williams, DTM**

2023-2024 Division N Director

District 35

email: rhondainwisconsin@gmail.com

9/9/2023

Good morning District 35 Toastmasters:

I am very hopeful about Northern Division this year. While we wind down from summer and put our shoulders to the wheel we already have some momentum. Seven new members have joined clubs. Only three of the clubs have less than double digit membership. Most clubs had at least four officers trained with an overall average of 5 officers per club. Education awards are starting to show up on the dashboard, and club visits are underway.

What I am most excited about is the team, especially the Northern Area Directors.

I have known Robert Lambert the longest, and many years ago we became Facebook friends. While we don't know each other well, I do appreciate a lot about Robert – especially his sense of humor. Several years ago I put a Christmas tree up in my house, and my cat Otto thought it was the coolest hangout ever. I posted a picture of him on Facebook and Robert liked it. Then I got the brilliant idea to protect the tree by wrapping it in chicken wire, which I also posted, and Robert was the first to like that post. I decided then and there that anyone who saw the wisdom of wrapping a tree in chicken wire had a great sense of humor that matched my own.

I have also seen Robert perform many roles in Toastmasters. Of my team he has the most experience, and he really knows how to deliver a speech, give a great evaluation and perform all the roles that make a meeting effective. If you want to know how to do something well, watch him.

I met Bryson Bernarde more recently. He has not been a Toastmaster very long. I asked him about his Toastmaster journey and was surprised by what he told me. He lived through the pandemic in a place that was heavily locked down, and after the pandemic he found he had become almost unable to talk to people. If you ever have the joy of talking with him, you might be as surprised as I was to hear this. He is warm, engaging and enthusiastic about any topic. In a single conversation, you can see his kindness shine through. Please take time to get to know him. You'll be glad you did.

The last person to join my team was Dan Odero. I already knew who Dan was from watching him compete in speech contests. I knew that he is intelligent and witty. What I have learned by getting to know him better, is he has a lot of skill as a leader. He continues to demonstrate his intellect and yet remains humble and seeks new ideas. He also speaks very highly of others. He is thoughtful and listens carefully. He is curious, kind and is also willing to get up at 2 am in the morning (his local time in Kenya) to attend a meeting. More than once! If you want to understand commitment, you should talk to Dan. You will learn a lot.

We know this team of Area Directors has the skill to do their Toastmasters duties. However, they are much more than skilled Toastmasters. They are really good people who are genuine in their desires to help members become empowered through self-confidence and personal growth.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rhonda Williams, DTM  
2023-2024 Division N Director  
District 35



**DeDe Obuch, EC5**

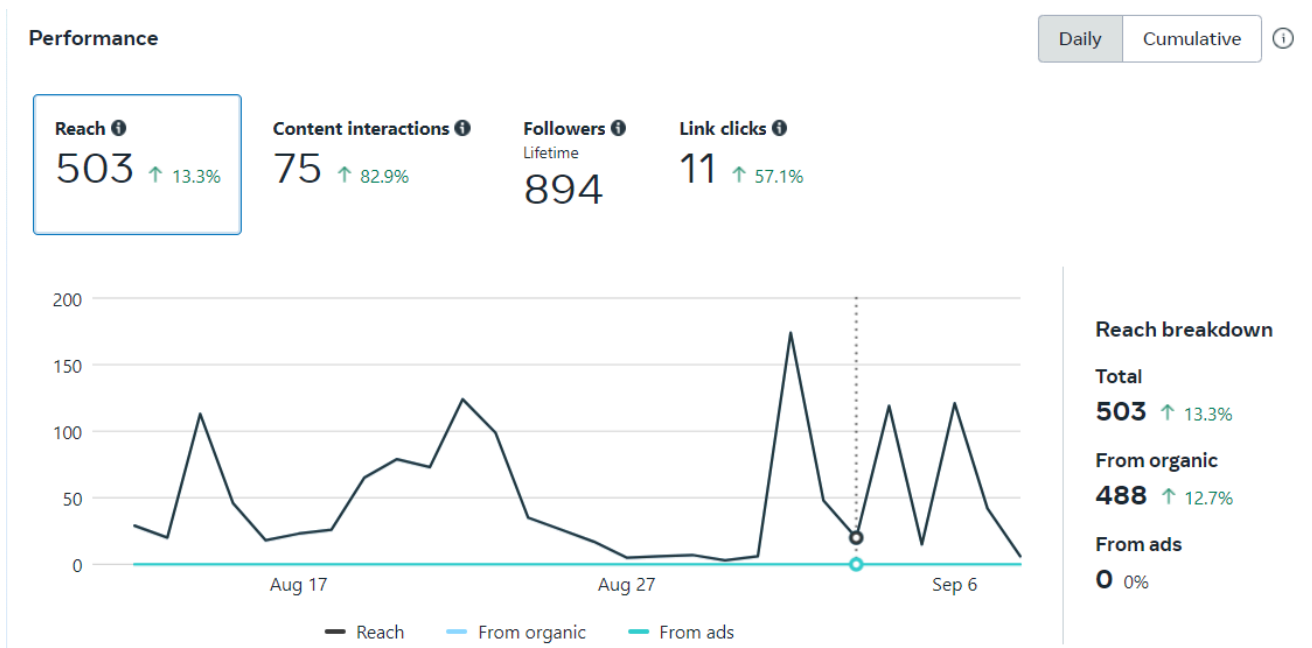
2024-2025 Public Relations Manager  
District 35

## 9/9/2024: Public Relations Manager Business Report

### Social Media/Communications Overview

- **Facebook**

- **Facebook Page Followers:** 894
- **Demographics:** Predominantly female, ages 45-64, mainly from Milwaukee
- **Engagement Trends:**
  - **Notable Influences:** Posts with the most interaction were club mentions, such as Anniversaries and training announcements



- **LinkedIn**

- **Followers:** 187
- Posting activity has been made to be in sync with Facebook; but this is not driving a lot of engagement.
- This will be evaluated to identify posts that will engage the LinkedIn audience more

- **Email Campaigns (Weekly News)**
  - 1,648 Email subscribers
  - Weekly News has climbed from 35% --> 60% opens, with consistent 3% link clicks

**Action Items and Requests:**

- Upcoming initiative: periodic calls with club VPPRs for idea sharing and networking
- Request to DEC members to provide content ideas for weekly news as well as Facebook/LinkedIn





**Jason P. Feucht, DTM**  
Immediate Past District Director  
District 35  
email: [jfeucht.tm@gmail.com](mailto:jfeucht.tm@gmail.com)

September 14, 2024

District 35 Toastmasters:

I'm excited to continue to support District 35 in my role this year as your Immediate Past District Director (IPDD). According to Toastmasters International the IPDD "provides counsel and guidance to District leaders and plans, directs, and organizes projects and committees as requested by the District Director." District Director Robert has chatted with me about a few projects that he would like me to look into over the course of this year and I look forward to digging into those responsibilities, providing support, and guidance, as well as being a sounding board to the District Trio, District Executive Committee, and other Toastmasters. I look forward to working together and sharing whatever I can in support of the District Mission, our clubs, and most importantly you, our members.

In August I was able to attend the Toastmasters International Annual Convention and the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Toastmasters that was in Anaheim, California near where Toastmasters International was founded October 22, 1924. If you have never attended the Annual Convention either in person or virtually, I encourage you to do so in the future. This year marks the 7<sup>th</sup> time I have been able to attend the annual convention and each year it does not disappoint. Each time, I've been able to meet and connect with fellow Toastmasters and friends from across the world, watch the World Championship of Public Speaking, meet with the international leaders of Toastmasters as well as learn new ideas and new things about the future of this great organization.

This year in Anaheim I was especially honored to accept an award at the Toastmasters International Hall of Fame Ceremony on behalf of District 35. District 35 was recognized with the 2023 – 2024 District Club Strength Award. This award recognizes Districts that increased average club size by 10% or more between the start and end of the Toastmasters year. I'm pleased to share that because of all of YOU and YOUR hard work supporting your members in your clubs District 35's average club size increased by 12.59% between July 2023 and June 2024! This is the first time our District has received this recognition. Thank you and Congratulations District 35! I'm looking forward to us continuing to build on this success as we go into the future together.

Thank you for all you do, let's have another great Toastmasters Year!

Respectfully submitted,

*Jason Feucht*

Jason P. Feucht, DTM  
Immediate Past District 35 Director



**Yuriy Ksenidi, VC3**

2024-2025 Club Growth Director

District 35

email: warhawkforlife@gmail.com

September 14, 2024

Good morning District 35 Toastmasters:

Let me share a fear with you: I dread cold calling. I would rather skip the awkward conversation with a stranger, for any reason, let alone, trying to convince them why something is a great fit for them. Likely, you all experienced that kind of fear. Now that I am a Club Growth Director, I need to convince a key decision maker why a Toastmasters club is a great fit for their organization. What is the worst that can happen? Rejection. Like you also experienced this in your life. Why am I sharing this? Bear with me.

During the District Leader Training earlier this summer, I learned about two ideas. The first idea is the “Plus One Pledge.” Every member commits to inviting a guest to a club meeting by the end of December. It can be daunting to get someone to a meeting because, well, we are too afraid to ask. This pledge is meant to help us overcome that fear. I encourage you to formally accept this challenge by filling out the form here:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/events/centennial/CentennialPledge>

Now, here is my challenge to you: commit to bringing another guest to a meeting between January and June. Overcome your fear and share the transformative benefits of Toastmasters with that person and inspire them to become confident communicators and leaders just like you.

The second idea is learning through leadership. This is a habit of supporting your club and our district, while learning to do things differently and seeking continuous improvement. For example, a learning leader:

- accepts multiple types of teammates and adapts to their styles and personalities.
- fosters engagement through feedback and observation of the environment
- understands how to learn through listening and curiosity.
- holds themselves accountable through measurable goals.
- understands how to develop a plan and changes the plan as needed.
- takes fear and makes it into a gift for themselves-overcoming that fear through practice.

To help me overcome my fear I ask you to think about what you gained by being in Toastmasters. Whatever it is, someone opened the door for you. You too can open the door for someone who is steps away from earning that promotion or eager to take a leadership role in an organization. You can help more people realize their potential and overcome their fears. How can you do this? Spend 10 minutes each week thinking about people you know, and their friends, family, colleagues, fellow alumni, and anyone else. Where do they work, or which organizations are they part of? Next, fill out the “Lead Sheet” form, or contact me by email or phone, and I will follow up with those companies and organizations. This form will appear in each edition of Weekly News and on the district website.

Here is the lead form: <https://forms.gle/gF1Ky5pdQotviymr6>

I also would love to have you be on my demonstration, new club sponsor and mentor teams. You can gain new skills and get closer to being a Distinguished Toastmaster. If you know of anyone who is interested in supporting a new club, please send them my way and I will provide training and support.

When I give this report next time, it will be spring. My goal by then is to celebrate at least one club chartered and want that club to be the outcome of the lead you send to me. My bigger goal is to have a club in every one of Wisconsin's counties without a club by June 30, 2025. Together we can ensure that no matter where a person lives, there is a Toastmasters club nearby. Even if, come June 30, there are counties without a club, but we have an organization or a group of people coming close to becoming a club, this is a solid foundation for next year. Club building is not a one-year project. Whether you send me a lead, serve, or recommend someone who can serve, on demonstration team, club coach, sponsor, or mentor, you move past your comfort zone and fears and support our District. For my part, I will try to stop dreading cold calling and turn that fear into a gift to myself. In my spring report, I will share how many people I cold called and what I learned.

I look forward to collaborating with you to build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence. Keep seeking challenges and thank you for the opportunity to serve the District this year as your Club Growth Director.

Respectfully submitted,

Yuriy Ksenidi  
2023-2024 Club Growth Director  
District 35



**Theresa Flynn, DTM**  
2023-2024 Program Quality Director  
District 35

9/9/2023

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence. You've heard about club building; let's talk support for excellence.

This year we will have more in-person events. Excellence comes from engagement and sharing best practices. We're planning an in-person TLI in Northern in November, contests will be in person, and I'm planning to visit some D35 cities and towns and offer short workshops that just happen to end with pizza or Indian food or bakery. If any clubs would like to host an event in their area, let me know. I'll be reaching out to make this happen. I miss seeing you.

So far this year we've had a good start to Program Quality metrics. Over 60 clubs had four officers trained, with at least 21 having seven officers trained. I'm being a little squishy on the numbers for a reason: While the training sessions themselves ended on August 31, officer training tabulation is due in October. Check the District 35 page to make sure all officers have credit for attending training! Responses are still trickling in from confirmations from other districts when members of D35 clubs visited other districts for training. Remember: you can visit other districts, but make sure they let me know so you get credit! There are opportunities around the clock.

We have posted incentives for clubs and individuals to try something new and support one another. The Ambassador program is back: Visit a club and fill in a short form about what you learned. You can visit virtually or in person. For those of you who remember banner raids, we have a new spin on it: Allied Collaborators in Excellence! ACEs! Groups of at least four from a club can reach out ahead of time to the club they want to visit and help that club by doing meeting roles, helping create images for publicity or offering mentoring time outside the meeting time. The visited club's president fills out a form listing the tasks the ACE club did. The visited club has a well attended meeting or open house and is even more appealing to guests, and the ACE club gets district dollars. Win/Win! Also, the ACE participants will get a pin to show off their support for other clubs. It is also possible for the smaller clubs to reach out to larger clubs to recruit ACEs especially for open houses or special meetings with a lot of publicity. We are also starting an Accountability Partner program for people who want that support working toward goals. There's a form on the Incentives page. And the DOUBLE DOG DARE program is if you want help formulating your goal ñ fill out that form on the incentives page and let's talk!

All year long, we will hold virtual workshops, training sessions and discussions on a variety of topics including attracting guests, Free Toast Host and developing speeches. Please check the calendar on [district35.org](http://district35.org) for times and specific topics. We're still looking for additional

presenters, so if you have ideas for training or you'd like to do one of the topics we're developing, please let me know! It's a great opportunity to speak outside the club!

As mentioned, all contests will be in person this spring. We're doing table topics, which everyone is eligible for, and International speech contest is for Toastmasters who have completed level 2. Clubs can decide how to send forth one contestant for each contest to Area. All contests will need participants and volunteers so think about what you'd like to do and let your VPE and Area Director know. We're looking for locations, so if you know of a space with a side room that cannot hear the main room, please make note of it and let your area director know.

And the first weekend in May we will hold our annual celebration and festivities of the District 35 conference in lovely Neenah Wisconsin. We will put out a call for volunteers, but one effort we're starting with is finding corporate and community sponsors. Teri McGregor and I are working on finding companies with corporate clubs or Toastmasters employees that would be willing to budget a sponsorship. They'd get some supportive publicity, and every sponsor we find brings the cost of conference tickets down further.

I'm looking forward to the rest of this year of achieving excellence, developing skills and connecting with other Toastmasters.





**Robert Wall, DTM**

2024-2025 District Director

District 35

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It doesn't feel like it, but we're almost 1/4 of the way into the year! Yuriy, Theresa, and I just went to District Leader Training this previous month, and we had a great time. We learned lots of things, and we're excited to implement some of those ideas this coming year.

District Leader Training was immediately before the International Convention, and if you watched the Toastmasters International Board Briefing, you may have heard about the district realignment program. Districts have been asked to support the process by appointing a past district director or past district governor as a representative to the committee. I am appointing Jim Kohli, DTM, PDG, PRA, PID, as our representative.

Let's talk about our district's membership for a minute.

About 55% of our current members joined during or after COVID. About 46% of our members have joined since I was elected as CGD 2.5 years ago. About 25% of our members have joined in the past year.

And our churn cycle is shortening. As the average member's tenure decreases, this means that now, more than ever, we're playing a numbers game. We need to recruit more new members in order to get the same number members that traditionally stick around and pursue leadership.

But how do we do that? There are two things I've been saying since the day I was elected as CGD, and I offer them for your consideration.

The first thing is pragmatic, and it's how I close every one of my DEC presentations. I say, "you can't ever do everything, but you can always do something."

I had a club open house a few years before COVID. We had planned it out, we had a great speaker, we had snacks, we'd done promotion, we were going to have a great evening. And then life happened. Our speaker had a family emergency. Our snack person wasn't there due to work challenges. Our evaluator wasn't going to be there either. Our Table Topics person was sick. It was 30 minutes before the meeting, and I was sitting there in an empty room with fancy printed agendas, and quite honestly, very little hope.

I'm sure none of you can relate, right?

I walked across the library to the farthest garbage can from where we were meeting, and threw away the agendas. The evening we'd planned clearly wasn't happening, and I wanted to hide the evidence. But we'd been promoting, and we had guests coming.

So I did something. I scribbled out a rough outline for a speech I'd been developing. Then other people did something. One of our members was just coming from an event, and had snacks and soda in the trunk of her car. Somebody else grabbed an Internet list of Table Topics questions and volunteered to be Table Topics Master. A few other members volunteered to give testimonials.

When everybody pitched in and did something, within 30 minutes half a dozen members turned a complete disaster into a successful event that got us several members.

You can't do everything. But you can always do something. And when you focus on the most important "something," you'll frequently find that it's enough.

The second thing I've been saying is vision-focused, and it's how I sign my emails. "Take your next step to significance."

I believe that most people want to make a difference. They want to be remembered. They want to know that something in the world is better because of them. But sometimes the mundanity in life hides the magical.

You're a member of a club. It's something you do on a Tuesday night. Or maybe a Wednesday afternoon. Sometimes you take a meeting role. Sometimes you just chat with people before or after the meeting. Sometimes you're fired up. Sometimes you're dead-tired from a long day at work. For you, it's just another Toastmasters meeting.

But for somebody else, it might be the first step in a changed life. They might not even know it yet. They might be sitting in their home right now, stressing out about asking their boss for a raise. Wondering how they can communicate better with their kids. Wishing they had the confidence to pursue their dreams.

They just need a spark of hope, and because you're a Toastmaster, you have it. Is this the week you're going to help them find it? 30 years from now, when they're listing off the people that helped shape their future, will you be one of them?

It might sound hokey, but I hear these stories all the time from long-term Toastmasters. "30 years ago, Dave invited me to a Toastmasters meeting. And it changed my life." And those stories all start the same way - with a member inviting a guest.

What do you say? How about we start some new stories this year?

Your area director, your division director, and the Trio are all here to support you. And in particular, my door is always open. If there's anything we can do to support you and your club in starting some stories this year, please don't hesitate to reach out!