



## **Toastmasters – A Step in a New Direction**

By Lynne Kobus

Go ahead! Step out of your comfort zone. Check out Toastmasters. Find out if speaking in front of a group is for you. It could be an exhilarating experience.

From what I've observed, most people don't like to speak in front of a group. I'm one of them.

When I attended my three complimentary meetings at Toastmasters, there was absolutely nothing that was comfortable about the experience. I was (and still am) confronting a fear.

Soon I developed some level of comfort with certain elements of Toastmasters, so I continually volunteered for what felt safe. I avoided signing up for what I didn't think I could do.

After a meeting one Monday evening, Fran (the person who brought the Toastmasters opportunity to Renfrew) needed someone to do the Toast for the next meeting. I said I wasn't comfortable with the Toast, so Fran said, "Fine, I'll put you down for that". I could have refused but didn't. Fran was giving me the chance to shake myself out of my comfort zone into "danger".

All week, I thought of what I would say and finally pulled something together in the last few hours before the meeting. And guess what! It went fine. I got to give myself a pat on the back.

Everyone has heard the saying, "Don't make a mountain out of a molehill". What I had been doing was making a "molehill" out of a "mountain". I chose the "mountains" that were easiest for me and started making them into "molehills" – new comfort zones. But I had to jump into the other "mountains", like the Toast, to increase the challenge, to feel "danger".

I have learned that even if I get up to speak and "fall flat on my face", I will have the support of the group and at least I will know the direction I have to take.

So take a step in a new direction. Visit the Renfrew Toastmasters group on Mondays at 7pm at 236 Hall Avenue East. We offer you three "dangerous" complimentary meetings.

For more information call Lynne at 432-7557 or Fran at 649-2950.