

March 22, 2007

Weekly Newsletter for Renfrew & Pembroke Toastmasters Club Members and Friends of Toastmasters - grab a coffee before you sit down to read this one...LOL

If you are open to learning, you will always find something to learn.

We had a small meeting in Pembroke. John Munkittrick was the Toastmaster and shared some interesting philosophical quotes with us. Maria gave a wonderful educational tip on Impromptu speaking and Kevin tried his hand at timing again. Fran did the toast and word - extemporaneous - and was the acting President in Nigel's absence.

Chris did a great job of reporting on the Renfrew meeting.

Who was there? - As always, Marg did a superb job as the Sergeant-at-Arms, ensuring everything was prepared ahead of time for members, and she welcomed everyone as they arrived. There were seven of us.

What happened? As you know, George filled in as the "acting" President, and the following people filled in "the blanks" re: the other roles required: Toast was offered by Marg; Word of the Week (Verbose) by Osiah; Story & Jokes by myself (with jokes courtesy of George); Educational Tip by Wellwood; Toastmaster: Lynne; Timer: Osiah; Grammarian: Wellwood; Ah Counter: George; QuizMaster: Don E.; General Evaluator: Lynne; Table Topics Master: Lynne.

Marg gave an inspirational speech entitled: "Our Unknown Soldier, Who Was He?" (8 - 10 minutes in length). I evaluated her speech, which was my first attempt at speech evaluation; and I was both honoured and humbled to perform this task for a 'seasoned member'. I was surprised to receive the 'best evaluator' award later in the evening. Marg received the best Speaker award of the evening. The duo of Osiah and Don received the best Table Topic award for the evening. And, Don received the 'Sparky' award. There was no one present at the meeting that did not take on one of the required roles...so, everyone noted in this summary were the seven present. Candice sent her regrets; but, is anxious to return again next week. Lynne had us doing a very interesting thing for table topics...she paired us up and had us present (two at a time, three minutes for each pair) on a topic, alternating sentences, as though we were telling a story, speaking of one mind. It was a challenging thing to do....and indeed, Osiah and Don were the most effective at 'speaking as one mind'. The other pairs (Marg and I; Wellwood and George) had more of a tendency to enter into a bit of a dialogue with one another. This was fun and a good learning experience....I think it's something we'd all like to try again, for another Table Topic exercise in future.

What else? At the end of the meeting, when members were asked to comment 'for the good of Toastmasters' it was recognized that although our meeting, in your absence, 'had its glitches'; it was a good learning experience for everyone, and forced some of us to take on roles we might have not done so readily, if not required to do so. It was suggested that we could all benefit from your knowledge if we were to be forced to assume certain key roles on a more regular basis (a few times a year/or once a month) and had the benefit of your presence to guide us as we practice them. What do you think? This can be further discussed at a future meeting.

With regards to next week, these are the roles that have thus far been chosen:
Sergeant-at-Arms: Marg; **Toastmaster:** Marg; **Word of the Week:** George;
Joke/Story: Chris; **Timer:** Osiah; **QuizMaster:** Lynne; **General Evaluator:** Lynne;
Speaker #1: George; **Speaker #2:** Osiah. The remaining blanks need filling. (Ok, I will take on **Table Topics** - Fran)

In Pembroke we had time to discuss some ideas to bring in more people and we came up with two. We may want to try these ideas out in Renfrew as well.

1. A Night of Toasting - invite anyone in the community who will be giving a toast at a wedding or a reception over the next few months to come and learn a bit about giving toasts. We can give them samples and let them practice in small groups with a Toastmaster member and then give their toast in the second half of the meeting.
2. A Speechcraft class of 4 weeks from May 8 to June 8 and then an additional 4 weeks from mid-September to mid-October. Cost \$25 for materials. This would require at least 3 or 4 Toastmasters to help get it started and would probably involve members of both clubs. With this idea there is no commitment beyond the first 4 weeks and then they could come back for an additional 4 weeks (at an additional fee of \$25) and if they decide to join at that time, we can give them \$25 off their annual membership.

The theme for next week's meeting is Setting Goals - think about your goals for the next 3 months.

What do you want to accomplish with regards to Toastmasters? What do you want to accomplish in your personal life?

The division speech contest will be held in Ottawa on Saturday. Everyone is welcome to attend and cheer on Lynne and Fred Schuck (who was the first place winner in both contests). Fran will be driving down. Please let me know if you need a ride or if you are going and can offer a ride to another member.

The spring conference is in Gatineau April 27-29 and registration is now \$175 . The room cost is \$109 for single or double.

Til next week
Fran

P.S. Let me know if I missed anything, and keep inviting guests and friends to our meeting so we can reach our magic number and get chartered. The sooner, the better.....everyone is waiting to come to our Charter Party!! We need to have 20 paid members to charter.

P.P.S. Here's an article I wrote on Impromptu Speaking after the meeting. I am going to send it to the paper this week.

Impromptu Speaking

Why do those words send a chill down the back of so many people? Impromptu speaking is something that we do every day of our lives unless we are a hermit living in a shack at the top of a mountain.

“Hello, how are you?” Your answer.....impromptu speaking! You haven’t had a chance to practice for this occasion, to choose just the right words to say to this particular person, you just say, “Fine, how are you?”

Now, this may lead to further impromptu conversation or it may not, it depends on how well you know the person, how much time you have to spend, etc.

If you are in the retail business and someone comes up to ask you a question about a product, you answer and there you go, you are doing impromptu speaking!.

Many people have said they’d rather be dead than give a speech in public, but how many of these people can talk to 4 or 5 people about something they are really interested in and not feel even a tiny twinge of fear. That is an example of public speaking.

It’s not really all that hard. People just think it is hard. But like anything, it takes practice to do it really well. You may think that you would never be able to speak like some of the motivational speakers you have seen, and you may be right, their style may not suit you. However, that doesn’t mean that you can’t learn to speak in the style that does.

Some people are humorous speakers and have no problem fitting humour into every speech they do, others are technical speakers and learn to present facts and figures in a way that makes people want to listen. Others are story tellers, wrapping their audience up in the tales they tell and still others have a dramatic flair using their gestures to give their audience an idea of what they are talking about.

Just as it is important in internet marketing to find your particular niche or market, so it is in public speaking.

People join Toastmasters and other speaking clubs for a variety of reasons. Some just want to be comfortable standing up in front of a group of people without stuttering and stammering. Others need to be able to deliver speeches and presentations in their daily job. Still others have dreams of becoming a standup comic or a motivational speaker. Each of us has a dream and each of our dreams is different, but we can come together and share these dreams in a safe and nurturing place – a Toastmasters’ Club.

Toastmasters International has developed a very thorough program which will lead you to develop skills in a number of areas such as: vocal variety--using your voice as a tool to engage your audience, speaking softly or loudly, with expression; gestures-- using your body in a way that enhances what you are saying; words--using words that match the level of your audience, not speaking over their heads, or beneath their abilities; organization—how to craft your speech with an opening, a body and a conclusion, how to choose 3 main points to cover so that the audience will retain your message. All these and more are available to you in a Toastmasters Club.

In addition to the lessons you can learn about speaking, there are also opportunities for you to learn leadership skills as you participate in the weekly meetings as a Toastmaster, Table Topics

Master, Ah Counter, Quiz Master, Grammarian, etc. These skills are beneficial to anyone in the working world as you learn to listen to others, to really hear what is being said, and you learn to take charge of the group for a short period of time.

If you don't currently belong to a club, but would like to learn more about Toastmasters, you can google your town and the word Toastmasters or you can go to the main Toastmasters website and look for a club near you. You will find many things at a Toastmasters Club, much more than just help with your speaking; you will find friendship and caring and people who want to help you be the best that you can be.

