



# DISTRICT 55 CONFERENCE NEWS

## District 55 first ever virtual conference



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

**DISTRICT 55**

[www.tmd55.org](http://www.tmd55.org)



MAY 21ST - 23RD

# SAVE THE DATE

"New Thought" 2021

DETAILS COMING SOON!

## CHIEF NEWS GUY

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As I drove home from a wonderful Thanksgiving celebration, the often underrated rock band Supertramp came on the radio,, and for the millionth time, I listened to and sang Give a little bit. I understand the song and what it means but this year, in particular, the words "there's so much that we need to share,, so send a smile and show you care" got me thinking about how we give. Even smiling can be a challenge in such a tumultuous year, and I mean literally because a face mask hides this beautiful physical gesture.

How can we, as Toastmasters, give back to our communities, our clubs, and one another? Good question. This month's publication is dedicated to a mashup of giving and feedback. In a sense, feedback in the form of an evaluation is a kind of giving. We know the second speech contest this year in District 55 will focus on evaluations. Because of this, I sought out one of my favorite D55 evaluators, Ms. Jessica Freasier to help break down what makes a successful evaluation and what traps to avoid when delivering first-class feedback. You can read the excerpt in the pages to come, and watch the full interview [here](#).

Want to give your club the gift of Pathways? Karen Archer shares some of the opportunities each club and area has to gain further recognition by new members embracing the education program. Speaking of education, Kathy Moore's team continues to offer some of the best content this district has ever seen. Can't make a session? No worries, replays are always available on our YouTube Channel or through the resource library on our TMD55 web page.

Our very own Nicole Akers takes a look at how the holidays don't have to be canceled in her magnificent piece about what we can all do to make this an incredible season to remember. What other ideas do you have for creating your own fun and enjoyment this holiday season? Share this with us on the D55 group Facebook page.

Speaking of giving back, why not consider assuming a leadership role next program year? Lark Doley DTM, PIP, reminds us the opportunity to make an impact to your fellow members as well as enhance your personal or professional skills. Applications will be taken through the end of January. Read more about it in the following pages.

Finally, if you noticed our content this month to be a little light, you're correct. We need more folks to contribute. Anyone willing to give a little bit of time writing an article, interviewing a fellow member, or helping with graphic design, I would love to hear from you. This publication will not be successful without your support and I welcome the assistance.

As always, let me know what's on your mind if you're so inclined. Happy Holidays, stay safe, and, stay mentally and physically fit.

"Give a little bit of your love to me, I'll give a little bit of my life for you."

Harlan Blumenthal, DL5, EH5  
Chief News Guy  
[newsletter@tmd55.org](mailto:newsletter@tmd55.org)





**District Director,  
Melody Moore, DTM**

A friend of mine posted this picture to her Instagram feed recently. It made me laugh out loud. It's exactly my type of humor, and it's pretty spot on for my personality type. Ever since I can remember, I've had strong opinions, and in high school, I sometimes was not very graceful in expressing those opinions. It wasn't a great way to make or keep friends. By the time I got to college, I had learned to keep my opinions to myself. Oh sure, I thought them, but I wouldn't say them out loud unless I was in the company of close friends.

Over the years, I have learned that there is a way and a time and place to give my opinion... and that if someone offers me their feedback, it comes from their desire to help me be better. Even the opinion from the man who told me that my shoes were loud and distracted from my speech. (He was right!)

One of the best parts of the Toastmasters program is that we learn how to give and take feedback, and it's something we practice at every meeting. We learn to give feedback in a way that is honest and helpful, constructive, and kind. We learn to accept feedback graciously, with an open mind.

This year, one of our District 55 contests is Evaluation. Every member has the opportunity to participate in this contest and give feedback to a speaker. Non-competitors get to listen to multiple evaluators offer their opinions of the same speaker. We'll see a variety of feedback methods and hear different ideas. I learn so much from this contest every single time it comes up for our district.

I'm not sure who said, "Feedback is a gift." I've heard it attributed to several different people. But I know that Bill Gates said, "We all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve." Both ideas are true. Feedback is a gift, and we need it to improve.

This year, I hope all your Toastmasters friends are giving you the gift of their opinion... and I hope you're excited.



Program Quality Director,  
Kathy Moore, DTM



### **Training Tuesday winds down with a Holiday Live Streaming Event Extravaganza on 12/8/2020**

Join us at 8:30 pm via Zoom or attend the Live Streaming Event on the public D55 Facebook Page for a special year-end event as we share some holiday cheer with friends, family members, and fellow Toastmasters. You'll also learn a little bit about how to live stream a Toastmasters meeting. Paul Montoya and Bryan Martinez will be your hosts for this educational portion of our program. To sign up, register [here](#).

We will then have a memorable Christmas speech by Area Director Nancy Graves from Corpus Christi. Following Nancy, Jason Wold, DTM will lead us in Christmas table topics. All attendees are welcome to participate. This event will offer an excellent opportunity to invite guests.

Finally, we will award prizes to the attendees with the most creative, most colorful, and best overall Zoom Holiday decorations. Everyone is welcome. We hope you can make it. Please reach out to me if you have questions at [d55-pqd@tmd55.org](mailto:d55-pqd@tmd55.org)

LET'S GET  
INTO THE  
HOLIDAY  
SPIRIT!

With a live streaming party on 12/8  
at 8:30 pm. Prizes for best Zoom  
Decorations. Invite all your friends!





**Club Growth Director,**  
**Livya Mitchell, DTM**



November was a busy month!!! More Club Coaches were appointed to support the growth and success of our clubs. The Speakers Bureau has a great line-up of Advanced Toastmasters. Our Area Directors have visited our club and submitted status reports, and the Club Growth Team received terrific gifts from Toastmasters International.

Any new clubs that organize during December and January of the current program year and pay future renewal dues will have the charter fee (\$125), and the new member fees (\$20 per member) waived. To qualify, new clubs will need to fully complete the charter process, pay the \$45 membership dues for each charter member, and pay the prorated amount for the next renewal cycle (April 2021) by January 31, 2021. Members of clubs which charter in this time frame will pay the total amounts (at the time of charter) as follows:

Month	Membership Dues	Prorated Amount	Total Amount Due
December	\$45.00	\$30.00	\$75.00
January	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$67.50

There are members of our families, friends, and workplaces who would benefit from this! Is there a friend needing to hone their interviewing skills? Do you have a co-worker wanting a promotion? Do you know someone wanting to develop their leadership and communication skills but lives far away? We can now charter clubs online! Reach out to our [Club Growth Team](#). We will help you get started.

What gifts have you received from Toastmasters? I attribute my current training manager position to the skills I developed through Toastmasters. How about you? The Golden Toastmaster gifts of personal and professional development enhance our lives every day.



During this holiday season and as you plan for the new year, what are YOUR future goals? How can Toastmasters help?

As the District 55 Leadership Committee Chair, we have Golden leadership opportunities for you in the 2021-22 program year! Gain competencies in management, strategic planning, goal setting, organization, fiscal responsibility, team building, collaboration, delegation, and marketing, to name a few! Serve as an Area Director, Division Director, Club Growth Director, Program Quality Director, District Director, or on one of their teams. Read more about these roles online at [tmd55.org](http://tmd55.org) or [toastmasters.org](http://toastmasters.org).

If you have any questions about these roles, contact me at [ldoley@toastmasters.org](mailto:ldoley@toastmasters.org).

To apply, complete the following, which can be found on the TMD55 website.

- [District Leader Nominating Form](#)
- [District Leader Biographical Data Form](#)
- [District Leader Agreement and Release Statement](#)



Email these completed forms with a photograph to [Lark Doley](mailto:Lark Doley)

**The deadline for applying is January 31, 2021**

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## ONLINE MEETING SURVEY RESULTS - TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

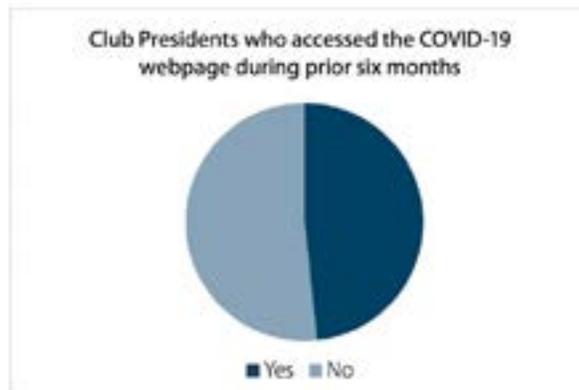
Recently, World Headquarters Research and Analysis conducted a series of surveys to club officers regarding the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our clubs, members, and meetings. Click [here](#) to find a summary of the survey results and resources to help facilitate online club meetings. You may also be interested in reviewing the newly-created [Running a Successful Online Club Meeting](#) document.

We recognize that online meetings present novel challenges; we hope you will continue working diligently to support the members in your club. By serving as a club officer during this time, you have the ability to help shape the future of Toastmasters.

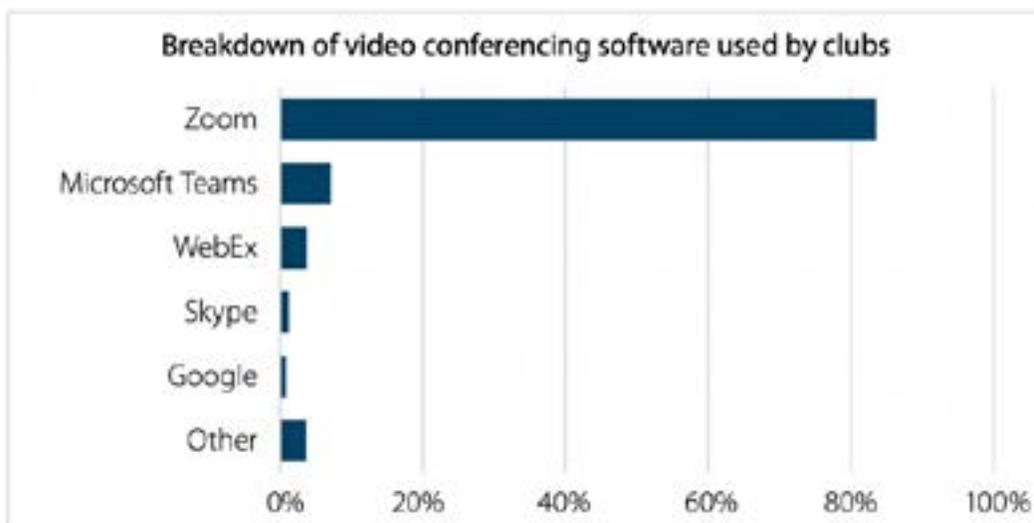
Thank you to the leaders who took the time to participate in the surveys. Your insight and wisdom help us have a better understanding of how Toastmasters can provide support for our members around the world.

### Club Officer Survey Highlights

- Over 60% of Club Presidents were aware that the Board of Directors made an exception to Policy 2.0 that allowed all clubs to meet virtually. About half of Club Presidents reported having accessed the COVID-19 webpage on [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org).



Nearly 85% of clubs are using Zoom to run their meetings virtually.



## DON'T CANCEL THE HOLIDAYS, ENJOY THEM DIFFERENTLY By Nicole Akers

Everything about the holidays will be different this year. Visiting Santa means seeing him behind a protective barrier or going online. According to AARP, this holiday season, 67% of adults are happy to think about spending time with family and friends. If you're not traveling to be with family, you can still celebrate the holidays. In the United States, the holiday season is traditionally the time from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day. Keep the holiday spirit alive by remembering what the holidays are about and celebrating them differently.

### Be Thankful

Gratitude never goes out of style. Thanksgiving is commonly a time where you think of turkey, cranberries, and stuffing, where you stuff yourself full, then sit around the TV to watch football and peruse newspaper ads for Black Friday deals. It's a day to be thankful for your blessings. What if we were grateful more often? Do you remember why we're grateful? You can be creative to show gratitude.

### Browse the Lights

Enjoy a Festival of Lights. Load up the family in the car and drive the neighborhood or around the city. Maybe plan a day trip to a nearby destination where everyone gets in their jammies to find light displays you wouldn't otherwise see. Play memorable songs and set the mood for a special occasion. When you return home, you've already dressed accordingly and can go straight to bed.

### Gift Giving

Sometimes we forget to look around to see if we can meet the needs of others. You can give to a community food or clothing drive. Angel Tree blesses children with gifts who may otherwise be without because their parents are in prison. If you are looking to make a global impact, you can support Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. You can select small items a child wants and some necessities that fit in the size of a shoebox, to be shipped overseas. You can even track your shoebox to its final destination if you choose to do so.

### Start Something New

Organize something with the neighbors. There's a need somewhere that's commonly overlooked. You can bring people together to achieve a common goal. Making outdoor improvements is something you can do together while keeping a safe distance. You can fill a thermos with hot chocolate or warm milk and go door-to-door while singing carols. Maybe go to church. Again, be careful to gather with safety in mind.

### Reflect

Reflection commonly happens while enjoying food and beverages, music, and dancing. You might make alterations to behavior, like going to the gym more often or set the goal to quit smoking. Instead of making radical changes that are usually short-term, you can opt to make smaller, consistent changes to meet goals more quickly. Perhaps you can reflect on whether you're able to mentor a fellow Toastmaster in the coming year.

### Make New Memories, Keep the Old

If you're not already creating a time capsule of sorts, this may be an excellent time to consider one. Start a small box or particular container to add masks and pictures of current times. If you have kids who have only been to school virtually, I'd like to suggest ordering a school yearbook. Right now, you're frustrated by what you can't do, but one day, you'll want to look back and remember these times. Set aside small treasures of token memories for an occasion to remember current times.

### Keep the Spirit Alive

The holidays foster togetherness, peace, love, and joy. During this time of year, special times are more about the feelings they create rather than the activities themselves. With a little creativity, the holidays don't have to be canceled. Keep the spirit alive by celebrating them differently.

## WIN BIG AND HELP ANOTHER CLUB!!

Now is the time to get yourself, your new members, your Club, and your Area enrolled in Pathways. Earn prizes for sharing the love, too. If you click on the links and go to the promotions page, you will see these Pathways Awards:

[Pathways Adoption Award](#) -- ended 10/31/2020. Winners announced soon All Clubs that had 95% of all their members enrolled in Pathways by October 31, 2020, will be enrolled in a drawing to earn a SpeechCraft Starter Kit. Ten Clubs will win. Value \$20.00 ([winners p. 13](#))

[Pathway Champion for Club](#) -- closing date extended to 3/31/2021

- Achieve a 95% adoption rate for all members between the period September 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021
- Have the VPE and at least three other Club Officers attend or instruct at a Pathways Base Camp Manager or Pathways 101 Training
- Finally, the Club must have all new members into Pathways within 30 days or less and have a demonstrated mentoring program.

[Pathways Champion for Individuals](#) -- closing date extended to 3/31/2021

- To get started, send an email to [pathways@tmd55.org](mailto:pathways@tmd55.org)
- To become a Pathways Champion, an individual must
  - Attend BOTH a Pathways 101 training and a Base Camp Manager training
  - Assist a Club with increasing Pathways adoption rate
  - Lead a training session for their Club of choice and have the President of that Club sign off
  - Increase the Pathways adoption rate in their Club of choice by 25%

In addition to these Pathways awards, there are several designed specifically for Division and Area Directors. Also, coming in January is New Member Adoption by Club. Achieve new member Pathways adoption of 75% or higher and be entered into a drawing to win 6 Pathways pins. The Pathways team will select a total of five winners.

And finally, for those with a creative bend, submit no more than a 300-word essay and photo or a 2-minute video explaining why you LOVE YOUR PATH to the Pathways team at [pathways@tmd55.org](mailto:pathways@tmd55.org) and be one of two winners to earn a 2021 Weekly Planner and a Toastmasters pen and pencil set valued at \$18.00 total. (This contest will be featured again in March.)



Karen Archer, DTM is the current SAA for Texas Talkers Toastmasters, and Club Sponsor to Oracle San Antonio Toastmasters

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## Looking to be a Club Sponsor or Club Mentor

### Steps to Chartering and being a Sponsor

- Plan a demonstration meeting
- Publicize the meeting
- Contact the local chamber of commerce
- Display posters and announcements
- Target specialized groups
- Announce the next meeting
- Select temporary officers
- Follow up with reminder notices
- Collect dues
- Conclude with recognition

### What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a person who shares his or her knowledge and expertise with one or more people who have less experience. Mentoring a new Toastmasters club is similar in many ways to mentoring a single person. Mentors are the advisors and tutors for new clubs and significantly affect the degree to which a new club succeeds.

### Benefits for Mentors

- New clubs are not the only beneficiaries of the mentoring relationship.
- Mentoring allows you to
- Share your expertise
- Develop your capacity to translate values and strategies into productive actions
- Prove yourself as a valuable leader
- Invest in the future of Toastmasters
- Obtain fresh perspectives
- Build teamwork skills
- Apply leadership skills in new situations
- Earn credit toward the path to Distinguished Toastmaster award

I plan to call all of my family and friends that are not Toastmasters. For me, the most significant *give* I can receive is to share all of the benefits of Toastmasters. To help my younger cousin find her voice and share her gift. Will you Give the Gift of Toastmasters?

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## Contest Evaluation Tips & Tricks

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I enjoyed speaking with Ms. Jessica Freasier, a member of both Laughing Matters and Master Speakers of Austin, an advanced club focusing on feedback. I asked Jessica her thoughts around evaluations, precisely what makes an evaluation stand out, what are some of the traps people seem to fall into, and how someone can put together an evaluation that is contest-worthy.

Jessica is a native Australian, holding dual citizenship, and has been back in the US for two years. Since March, she has hunkered down due to Covid, spending much of her time learning memory techniques that will surely come in handy during contest season.

It was interesting to get her perspective on the evaluation's objective and the gift one receives in listening to that speech. Treating your speaker with respect, genuine kindness, and giving them back a gift of thanks in the form of an evaluation make a great combination.

Jessica said most people spend too much time talking about themselves during the 2-3 minute evaluation. "The evaluation should focus on the speaker. We all want to relate to something the speaker said, but we've got to avoid talking about ourselves. The evaluation is for the speaker". She went on to say that recapping the speech can waste valuable time; think reciting Cliff's Notes version of the speech.

For anyone considering competing, rest assured you'll run into Jessica as she competes in both her clubs. Who knows, maybe she'll compete against herself. Oh, I guess you can't do that. Regardless, take a listen and watch the video, posted on our YouTube Channel here,



## MILESTONES

	Charter	Years	Area	Club Name	
1	<b>12/22/19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>G 36</b>	<b>Alamo Ranch, San Antonio</b>	
	12/31/18	2	H 46	Alamo, San Antonio	
	12/11/17	3	K 76	Alpha, McAllen	
	12/13/16	4	F 21	Ernst & Young San Antonio, San Antonio	
	12/03/13	7	I 51	South West Austin, Austin	
	12/12/13	7	F 23	Toastmasters at Texas A&M University, San Antonio	
	12/10/09	11	F 25	HUB City, Pharr	
	12/22/04	16	H 45	Randolph-Brooks Rising Stars, Live Oak	
	22	<b>12/01/98</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>F 23</b>	<b>Laredo, Laredo</b>
		12/01/95	25	L 84	Dell, Austin
		12/01/95	25	G 35	Texas Talkers, San Antonio
12/01/92		28	I 51	Smoothtalkers, Austin	
12/01/91		29	G 31	Kerville Area, Kerville	
64	12/01/91	29	I 51	San Marcos, San Marcos	
	12/01/85	35	G 35	Northwest, San Antonio	
	12/01/85	35	L 83	Farmers Northstars, Austin	
	<b>12/01/56</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>H 44</b>	<b>Business &amp; Professional, San Antonio</b>	

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW DTMS

Division	Area	Date	Member	Club Name
J	65	11/04/2020	Yiting Liu	Armadillo Avenue Club

Don't forget to check out our updated [Promotions Page](#).  
Please check back from time to time for the latest and greatest information.

## PATHWAYS ADOPTION AWARD WINNERS

Club Number	Club Name
423	Texas State Talkers Club
4573	Dynamic Public Speakers
5590	Big T Toastmasters Club
1214475	Fredericksburg Family Toastmasters

Congratulations to these clubs for winning a SpeechCraft Kit for achieving a 95% or higher Pathways adoption rate for new members.

# CALENDAR SNAPSHOT

## DECEMBER 2020

### Tuesday, December 1

- D55 Monthly Publication Distribution
- 7:00 pm Educate to Motivate - Harlan Blumenthal - DL5, EH5
- 8:30 pm Golden Leadership, Stepping Up - Lark Doley, DTM, PIP

### Saturday, December 5

- 9:00 am Division F Sponsored Virtual TLI

### Tuesday, December 8

- 7:00 pm TM101 - Coaching on Vocal and Visual Speech Techniques
- 8:30 pm Live Streaming D55 Holiday Party

### Saturday, December 12

- 10:00 am Division J Sponsored Virtual TLI

## JANUARY 2021

### Friday, January 1

- D55 Monthly Publication Distribution

### Sunday, January 10

- 2:00 pm DEC Meeting

### Monday, January 11

- 7:00 pm Part I - Division L Sponsored Virtual TLI

### Tuesday, January 12

- 7:00 pm TBD
- 8:30 pm TM101 - Speech Preparation and Delivery Basics

### Wednesday, January 13

- 7:00 pm Part II - Division L Sponsored Virtual TLI

### Saturday, January 16

- 9:00 am Division H Sponsored Virtual TLI



[Click here for online calendar](#)

## Division TLIs

Division	Date	TIME
F	12/5/2020	9AM – 1:15
G	2/8 & 2/10/2021	7-9PM
H	1/16/2021	9AM – 1:15
I	2/28/2021	
J	12/12/2020	10 AM- 2PM
K	2/22 & 2/24	7-9 PM
L	1/11 & 1/13/2021	7-9PM

## Division Contests

DIVISION	Date	TIME
F	4/17/2021	AM
G	4/17/2021	PM
H	4/24/2021	AM
I	3/27/2021	AM
J	4/12/2021	PM
K	3/27/2021	PM
L	4/24/2021	PM
District Contests	5/21 and 5/22	PM



## TOASTMASTER TO TOASTMASTER DISTRICT 55 MONTHLY PUBLICATION

Public Relations Manager, Rick Collins, DTM  
Social Media Strategist, Lilly Smith  
Social Media Coordinator, Christine Moore, CC  
Webmaster, Vishal Aslot, DTM

Publishing Team:  
Harlan Blumenthal, DL5, EH5  
Allen Avilla, CC, ALB  
Nicole Akers, PM1

contact: [newsletter@tmd55.org](mailto:newsletter@tmd55.org)

### 2020-2021 TRIO

District Director, Melody Moore, DTM  
Program Quality Director, Kathy Moore, DTM  
Club Growth Director, Livya Mitchell, DTM

contact: [d55dd@tmd55.org](mailto:d55dd@tmd55.org)



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

### DISTRICT MISSION

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

*Toastmaster to Toastmaster*, official publication of District 55  
Toastmasters in Austin Texas, USA, is published monthly since July 2020, to promote goals and ideas of District 55 Toastmasters.  
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