

TOASTMASTER TO TOASTMASTER

JANUARY 2021



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WHERE
LEADERS
ARE MADE

DISTRICT 55 CONFERENCE NEWS

District 55 first ever virtual conference



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

DISTRICT 55

www.tmd55.org



MAY 21ST - 23RD

SAVE THE DATE

"New Thought" 2021

DETAILS COMING SOON!

CHIEF NEWS GUY

I'm exhausted! It might be due to the workout I just finished, but I suspect it has everything to do with the year that was. As we roll into 2021, we focus on leadership. What does being a leader mean to you? From a Toastmasters perspective, it could be holding that officer position, gearing up to compete in our speech contests, or even participating as a key role player during the competition. Like me, you might have found your Zoom leadership skills enhanced 10-fold during 2020. I know my dear friend, Jean Ramsey, certainly did!

There is no end to what each of us possesses when it comes to leadership. In tough times we sometimes overlook what we've done that truly makes us stand out as leaders. We often equate leadership with politics or CEOs, but we fail to recognize that each of us is a leader in our own right. In your personal and professional life, what did you do to exude leadership qualities? Did you lead by example in keeping your family healthy and safe? Did you help someone in need, homeschool your children, keep your business afloat, or realize you can be successful on Zoom without wearing pants?

If your personal and professional life was not what you wanted last year, what will you do now to turn it around? Where will you lead yourself, your family, or your employees to achieve greatness? What will you do in Toastmasters that will help you stay on the path to achieving your DTM? Rhetorical, maybe! Realistic, most definitely.

Why do you want to lead, and why does it make any difference? The Oxford English dictionary defines leadership as the action of leading a group of people or an organization. In Toastmasters, the most basic form of leadership is taking on a role during a meeting. If you are the Toastmaster, aren't you leading the group through the meeting? If you are the timer, aren't you keeping the meeting on track and leading folks by giving them time-colored cues? Being a mentor, a club officer, and holding a district position, even being part of a contest are all leadership positions. Why do you take on these leadership roles? That's for you to answer.

This program year, I took on the position of Chief News Guy after spending the prior as the Chair of the Internal Speakers Bureau. The latter was a bit of a Franken-Experiment that this year's Chair, Lisa Traugott, has done marvels with. I took on the former since it was an excellent opportunity to break out of my comfort zone, learn how to use new software, and work with many outstanding people to create something special. Next program year, I am hoping to take another leadership position in the District...stay tuned.

No matter what you decide to do in 2021, remember that you are a leader for something and to someone. May this year bring you peace, joy, health, happiness, and perhaps the need to wear pants.

Harlan Blumenthal, DL5, EH5
Chief News Guy
newsletter@tmd55.org





District Director, Melody Moore, DTM

My kindergarten teacher, Mr. Cerretti, gave us precise instructions. "Hold on to the rope," he said firmly. We were going on a field trip. I don't remember the destination or many details. Still, I clearly remember his instruction to hold on tightly to the rope. I remember walking with my classmates in a single file line. Mr. Cerretti was at the front, with the rope in one hand. Each of us clung to a section of the rope as though it were our last lifeline, thinking that the mere act of holding our piece of the line would keep us safe. I remember the perilous trek down the side of Highway 79, walking farther and farther away from our school, staying on the left side of the viaduct over Bear Creek. It would have been terrifying alone, but Mr. Cerretti was in the lead, and we all had our hands on the rope.



My Toastmasters leadership journey has been a little bit like that field trip. As a new-ish Toastmaster, people told me that I should step up as a club officer and then into an Area Director role (Area Governor, at the time). I looked to those mentors and district leaders at every new point and expressed my nervousness and insecurities. But they encouraged me not to worry about the scary leadership tasks and just... hold on to the rope.

This month, as District Director, along with Kathy Moore (PQD) and Livya Mitchell (CGD), I will attend Mid-Year Training for District Trios. Our team of Region Advisors and staff from World Headquarters will take us through a series of training modules to help us continue our leadership journeys. I'm looking forward to learning from those experienced leaders and spending some time with other District Leaders. I feel fortunate to do this piece of my leadership journey with other dedicated Toastmasters and have many past district leaders and mentors' guidance.

Venturing into something new can be very daunting. It often causes us to pause and worry about whether we have the time, skills, or experience to undertake something farther from our comfort zone. As you consider going on the Toastmasters "field trip" into your next leadership role, regardless of what role that might be, know that you are not alone. You'll go with others who have similar goals, and you'll be guided by experienced Toastmasters. We have fantastic members who have been in that place, grasping a handful of rope and navigating the unknown, who then take the front end of the rope and show new leaders the way forward.

No, I can't remember where my kindergarten class was headed. But, as many people like to remind us – it's the journey, not the destination, that matters. So it's time! Leadership applications are due to the District Leadership Committee by January 31st. Grab your own spot of rope. When the terrain becomes unfamiliar, and the sidewalk feels too narrow, just... hold on to the rope!

Program Quality Director,
Kathy Moore, DTM



Building Your Leadership Muscle

Whether you are already a Club or District Officer, January marks the time of the Toastmaster year when you can stretch your leadership skills. Whether you're a seasoned Toastmaster or not, you can set an excellent example for your club members by

- signing up to compete in a contest
- chairing a TLI, Area, Club, or Division Contest
- serving as a Contest Toastmaster, Chief Judge, or other official
- help with the District Conference in May 2021

If you are a brand-new Toastmaster, you can help at a contest by

- serving as a Test Speaker for Evaluation Contests
- being a ballot counter, timer or Sgt-at-arms
- simply attending to see what contests are like.

Reach out to me if you want to help but aren't sure how. d55-pqd@tmd55.org

I have been immensely proud and excited this year as Program Quality Director to see so many new Toastmasters (three years or less) step up to help with Continuing Education Training. Special shout out to Lisa Traugott, Lilly Smith, Mia Giangelos, and Paul Montoya. Expect to be seeing some new faces at upcoming Continuing Education and TLI training. I had one new Club President who attended a session taught by Jean Ramsey and was so inspired that he signed up to teach a President class himself!! We have also benefitted from our transplanted Toastmasters, Carlos Velazquez (who wowed us with PowerPoint and VPPR training). And Danni Cordova Babik, who stepped up to teach some of our Club Quality main sessions.

We are also benefitting tremendously from having Lark Doley back in District 55, helping identify upcoming leaders as Leadership Committee Chair. If you get a call from Lark, please don't say NO! If you have not had the opportunity to watch some of the leadership classes she has taught this year, they are available in the [Resources Library](#).

I also owe a special debt of gratitude to our Regional Advisor, Violetta Rios, who is always there when we need her and a great leadership mentor. Speaking of which, mentoring is another excellent way to develop your leadership muscle, both as a mentor and mentee. Reach out to our Member Mentor Chair to find out more about how you can get involved. If your forte happens to be Pathways, we are on the lookout for Pathways Champions to assist Clubs or individuals who need help signing up, moving through levels, or managing Base Camp.



Club Growth Director,
Livya Mitchell, DTM



The Club Growth Team is at it again. In December, we met with community leaders who want to help develop leaders and speakers in their organization. 4 Clubs leads are being worked on, as I write from my desk.

In January, we hope to help those that wanted to keep to their New Year's resolutions and develop new skills. The New Club Incentive is still underway. The Big incentive....NO CHARTER FEE. If you desire to charter a new club in your community, the Club Growth Team will be here to help.

Writing from my desk, I reflect on what we have wanted to do and accomplish as a team. We have experienced what seemed to be insurmountable challenges, but we have also achieved much more than expected. Clubs that were thinking of closing their doors are bouncing back. Members have reinvested in their development. Perspective clubs are excited about soon being new members of our Toastmaster family.

As you reflect upon 2020, remember with the new year means new ideas, action, and accomplishments. I 2021, let's rethink the way we do the things we do. Rebound from the past. Rebuild our clubs, more importantly, for our future.

Rethink, Rebound, Rebuild.



Club Coach Panel & Training Session

DISTRICT 55 TOASTMASTERS

Livy Mitchell, DTM, Club Growth Director (CGD)

Join us for an "Hour of Power"

When: Tue, January 5, 2021, 7pm – 8pm
Where: Live on Zoom ([map](#))
Description: Looking for a new challenge in Toastmasters? Curious about the Club Coach role? Join us for a fun session, get some insight from a Panel of Club Coaches, and learn more about the role.

Register in advance for this session:
<https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/1JEkf-ur24qE93b7Q&SLCTH4L@sfVXqSd->

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Happy New Year! Happy New Decade!

What are your goals for 2021? What are your goals for the new decade?

2020 was a year of challenges for our world, but I like to take a positive approach to challenges and say that it was a year filled with Golden opportunities for our planet. We faced a global pandemic, and I believe that we faced it with incredible courage and innovation.

Do you have the courage to step forward into district leadership for the 2021-22 Toastmasters year, beginning July 1? How do you want to improve your life this year? How do you see yourself in future years? What are your plans for your future? How does Toastmasters figure into your plan?



For me, the decade of 2011 to 2020 was one of challenges and opportunities. On June 5, 2011, my husband Roger's 62nd birthday, he was diagnosed with cancer and passed away on April 3, 2014. My sister-in-law Becky suffered a massive stroke in February 2016. And, my dear Toastmaster friend and campaign manager David Estrada died of pancreatic cancer in November 2017. In 2020 our world was struck with a global pandemic. They say that difficulties make us stronger. I believe they do. The significant opportunity that emerged for me this past decade was continued service to Toastmasters International. I served as Region Advisor from 2010 to 2012 and as a Toastmaster Officer from 2015 to 2020.



One of my goals for this program year is to support District 55 to recruit and train Golden District 55 leaders. Do you want to be a part of the District 55 team in 2020-21? 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 one of their teams. Read more about these roles online at tmd55.org or toastmasters.org.

If you have any questions about these roles, contact Lark Doley. To apply or nominate someone else, complete the District Leader Nominating Form and email it to Lark Doley at ldoley@toastmasters.org. The deadline for applying is January 31, 2021.

What are your goals for the new year? What are your goals for the new decade? I hope you will consider Toastmasters leadership service from the club level to the international level in your plans, in your Golden opportunities!

LEADERSHIP VOLUNTEERISM *By Lilly Smith, D55 Social Media Strategist*

When was the last time you volunteered to do something you had never done before? If you're having a hard time remembering something, that's completely fine because I can't remember either. Earlier this year, I decided to join the Toastmasters District 55 PR team as our first-ever Social Media Strategy, to get further involved. When I say, "decided to join," that means I was voluntold to do so by our beloved Harlan Blumenthal. Just because I didn't think of the idea doesn't mean it hasn't been an impactful experience. Previously, I had never created social media pages, posted new content, or taught a group of people the differences between #hashtags and 'likes.' Exploring this unique opportunity has helped me become better in my personal life, setting goals and demonstrating leadership skills. If you are considering getting involved with the district but are hesitant to do so because it's new, here are three reasons why you should stop procrastinating and go for it.



The first reason you should try to volunteer with the district is the instant access you will have to an encouraging community. This past year has been one of significant introspection. What has stuck out to me is the realization of much I rely on human interaction. District 55 provides that human interaction and then some! You have access to speakers of all levels who want to make sure you grow in your District role and a speaker. As mentioned, the role of Social Media Strategist was brand new this year. Immediately, I was connected with our District's Leadership Team, who helped me strategize ways to grow our membership through Social Media.

The second reason to volunteer with the district is to create goals for yourself and have a team of people to hold you accountable. There's an old saying that wishful thinking is one thing and reality is another. I can daydream about conquering the world. Having people who will hold me accountable and help develop a game plan to do so is excellent. The Public Relations team set a goal to get District 55 active on the most popular social media sites by the end of the calendar year. We are keeping each other accountable to reach that goal. We are connecting with other team members weekly to brainstorm new ideas and ways they can be implemented.

The third reason to volunteer with the district is the leadership opportunities provided. Being part of the D55 team has allowed me to become responsible for TLI training and the practice that makes sure those webinars run well. Each person who volunteers has their own set of skills to bring to training and lectures and volunteering within the district. By putting yourself in a new role, you will have more opportunities to step up to the plate and practice your leadership skills.

It's hard to do something new, especially when people want to stay put in their comfort zones after a trying year. In the long run, what do you think is going to help you more? Doing the same thing you've already done over again? Or, trying something new, which will help you become better connected in your community, give you a way to set goals, and an outlet to flex your leadership muscle? I know what worked for me. If this upcoming year, an opportunity presents itself for you to try a new skill or lead people on a foreign topic, think hard before passing. It could be beneficial to you in more ways than you think.

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?

The best reflection comes from looking backward. This year began with such promise. A year that comes at the end or beginning of a decade brings with it an extra impetus for change. We started the year with 20–20 vision and the possibility of everything good that comes with it. If you had positive aspirations like most people going into a new year, they quickly turned into a pipe dream. There's still plenty of ambition to be found this year, but we may have to take a little more time to find it. And some revelations about all you've been through won't be noticeable right away. Once a bit of time passes, you'll likely notice how your thoughts have changed who you are and the way you think process information. Possibly something about this year will change the way you relate to others as well.

Suppose you're the kind of person who quickly analyzes where you are in relationship to your goals. In that case, you may want to slow down, especially this year, and go through the reflection process with a bit more care than usual. The psychology of reflection is a process of thinking about where you are and where you want to be. It considers the thoughts and feelings associated with the actions you are willing to take.

Analyze Who You Are You've got to analyze who you are and what you're willing to do to line up goals and aspirations. Become self-aware by investigating who you are and how you work. We tend to think of "self-focus" as egotistical and having a negative connotation. Still, this kind of self-awareness is a good thing. When you better understand yourself, you better understand your world and how you relate to it. Two popular personality profiles are Myers-Briggs and the Enneagram. Understanding the science of how you operate is helpful to comprehend how you move to accomplish goals. Bonus, it improves how you relate with others too. Many companies are looking for personality profiles as part of their hiring process.

Make a Better Plan by Choosing the Right People As you understand what makes you tick. You get a revelation about how others operate and work together. Whether you're a small business owner or work closely with others, understanding how you relate to each other and why you act in specific ways or under pressure helps eliminate difficulties.

Assess Emotions and Energy Levels Learning how others work tells you something about how they act under stress and how they do their work. Knowing these attributes about others helps mitigate emotions in high-pressure situations. Also important is to assess energy levels. I don't only mean ambition, but how much energy you have left at the end of the day. There are two kinds of drive. One type is associated with primary needs like food, clothing, shelter. The secondary type is related to cultural and emotional conditions like social status, or the ability to obtain money, social status, or others' approval. In that case, reflect upon how emotions and energy affect your team for the best results.

Look Back with Eyes to Learn Hindsight is still 20–20, but the revelation isn't immediate. A little time is your friend to discover past action with future-oriented goals. Psychologists say taking a short time to ponder big decisions is essential. Conversely, you don't want to take so much time that you become inactive. If you're overthinking a problem, it helps to put a date on the calendar as a deadline. Psychologists say the most prominent factor behind indecisiveness is fear. Once you've reflected, you're ready to take the next steps.

Move with Confidence You'll never have 100% confidence that you're making the right decision. Life is full of calculated risks, and you have to move anyway unless you're happy staying where you are. Suppose you've taken a little time to reflect and analyze who you are and how you work best. In that case, you have a better revelation than most people have about themselves. Bring people around you who have similarities in passion and action while also including others who challenge your thinking. Look backward to reflect on where you have been carefully this year. There may be more to learn than you've realized.

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards." Søren Kierkegaard.

MILESTONES

	Charter	Years	Area	Club Name
1	01/27/20	1	H 43	KWYP River Cities, San Antonio
	01/11/11	10	L 81	Central Texas Vocal Aces, Killeen
	01/06/09	12	G 32	Hill Country, Boerne
	01/01/08	13	K 74	iChatters, Austin
	01/03/08	13	I 53	HACA, Austin
15	01/01/06	15	H 46	Alamo City, San Antonio
	01/10/05	16	J 63	Community, Austin
	01/01/93	28	L 85	NI Speechmeisters, Austin
34	01/01/91	30	J 64	Texas State Talkers, Austin
	01/01/87	34	F 24	Highnoon, Corpus Christi

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW DTMS

Division	Area	Date	Member	Club Name
F	22	12/15/2020	Veronica Godley	G.U.T.S. Club -lackland AFB
F	24	12/16/2020	Megan Ysassi	Aqua Vitae

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

CALENDAR SNAPSHOT

JANUARY 2021

Friday, January 1

- D55 Monthly Publication Distribution

Tuesday, January 5

- 7:00 pm Club Coach & Panel Training Session
- 8:30 pm Contest Training - ZOOM Host

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 TM 101: Speech Writing made easy
- 8:00 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

Tuesday, January 19

- 7:00 pm Q&A Breakouts for contest officials.
- 8:30 pm 5 Tips to bring traffic to your club website

Tuesday, January 26

- 7:00 pm Pathways Training for Basecamp Managers
- 8:30 pm Pathways 101

FEBRUARY 2021

Monday, February 1

- D55 Monthly Publication Distribution

Monday, February 8

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

Tuesday, February 9

- 8:30 pm TM 101 - Speech Preparation and Delivery Basics

Wednesday, February 10

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

Saturday, February 13

- 9:00 am DEC Meeting

Saturday, February 20

- 9:00 am Area I53 online speech contest
- 12:30 pm Areas G31, G32 online speech contests (joint)

Monday, February 22

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

Wednesday, February 24

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

Saturday, February 27

- 9:00 am Area L84 Speech Contest
- 1:00 pm Areas K71, K74 online speech contest (joint)
- 5:00 pm Areas H44, H45 online speech contest (joint)

Sunday, February 28

- 7:00 pm Division I Sponsored online Virtual TLI

[Click here for online calendar](#)



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
Nicole Akers, PM1

contact: 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



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