

Vital News

The newsletter of "Vital Communicators Toastmasters Club
Club 7056, Division A, District 74



March 2005

Editor's note ...

2004 ended with one of the worst natural disasters known to mankind. Despite of this man continued with life. The first two months of 2005 is history, and I hope that you will enjoy every day of 2005!

Below are some of the new year's resolutions of club members:

- To complete my CL7, if not CL10
- To listen better to what other people say, without interrupting
- To have more "me" time and do more things for myself
- Stop complaining about things I don't have and appreciate the things I do have
- To make the best of every opportunity
- I want to work harder
- Live closer to God
- Get fit
- Get more organised
- Keep smiling
- Complete a CL10
- Stay unstressed as long as possible
- Develop discipline, courage and creativity
- Travel much lighter – reduce possessions by 30% and reduce my worries by 80%

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Chasing DCP

Susan le Roux, President

People join a Toastmasters Club for personal development. As a member you want to improve your speaking skills, enhance your leadership skills and gain confidence. Then you hear about the Distinguished Club Programme (DCP). What does it and what is it for the member? DCP was developed by Toastmasters International (TMI) as a motivation to clubs (and members) to excel. Lets look explore DCP:

Goal 1: Two CTMs and Goal 2: Two more CTMs

The basics offered by the Toastmaster's program is contained in the Communication & Leadership (CL) manual. Working through this manual one learns all the basic skills required to become a competent presenter, however, some of us tend to postpone what we have to do. By requiring at least four people to complete their CTM's during the course of the Toastmaster's year, TMI ensures that the Club does what it is supposed to do, namely to give prepared speeches on a regular basis in order for members to develop their skills.

Goal 3: One ATM and Goal 4: One more ATM

Some members feel that once they obtain a CTM (Competent Toastmaster) they have achieved their goal. It is true that once, one has mastered the basics skills these skills still have to be developed and refined. What better place to do it than at a Toastmasters club, where you can practice in a friendly non-threatening environment? If everyone left the club after completing a CTM, where will the experienced evaluators come from, and where will you learn to become an experienced evaluator – a skill you will surely need in your work environment.

Goal 5: One CL, AL or DTM and Goal 6: One more CL, AL or DTM

Toastmasters gives you the opportunity to develop your leadership skills. By giving members who were on the executive (thus already proved that they can take the lead) and who have completed their CTM's, (thus have developed the basic speaking skills) the opportunity to present educational sessions on different aspects of Toastmasters, these members can hone their skills in the art of doing a presentation not only for personal development, but also to inform and educate other members regarding the finer details of Toastmastering, so everyone benefits from it. In this way, members can progress to obtain the highest accolade in Toastmasters, namely the DTM (Distinguished Toastmaster) title.

Goal 7: Four new members and Goal 8: Four more new members

Why should we strive to get at least four new members per year, and even eight new members? Look at our own club: we lost one member through death; we lost two members who resigned because they felt that they got what they wanted from Toastmasters and another member is moving to Kwa-Zulu Natal. That is four members during the past six months. If we do not get new members to fill these vacancies, our club will decline and die.

Goal 9: 4 Club officers trained each training period

By setting this goal, TMI ensures that the leaders of a club are knowledgeable, that club meetings run smoothly and a club's administration are done for the benefit of club members.

Goal 10: One semi and one club officer list submitted on time

This is the easiest goal to achieve, but it ensures that the club's members pay on time and that the club's administration is done correctly. You do not want to belong to a club that is slap-dash in the basic running of the club.

The Distinguished Club Program was devised for the benefit of members and clubs. It keeps the momentum going, ensures good admin, and who would not be proud to state that **You** belong to an excellent club, which achieved the highest goals set by Toastmasters International.

Let us strive to achieve to be President Distinguished for the third consecutive year! We are on track, except for those new members – bring them so that they can also gain the same VITAL benefits which you are receiving from the club.

**No great thing comes to any man unless he
has courage**

~ Cardinal James Gibbons ~

Day of pouncing

Mzimkhulu Mcuba

It is cold, dark and a Wednesday evening and some of the members of Vital Communicators (VC) is getting ready to pounce.

It was planned some time ago to invade and pounce on the men-only Toastmasters Club, noga! invaded by women.

Imagine Cooks hiding behind a ten centimetre diameter stem of a tree, Frances moving up and down in the dark street, hiding her face and Susan speaking in a very soft voice and all these ladies are conniving to pounce on Forum Toastmasters Club.

For me, it was a first – seeing a Toastmasters' club invaded, taking over the programme of another club. Ten of Vital's members raided Forum Toastmasters.

I watched with fear and interest as these non-expecting victims were moving inside the building, preparing to start their meeting as usual. USUAL, Oh no, nothing was going to be usual about this evening, I said to myself.

As they were about to start, the general – Susan – said, in a soft whisper, "Now, it is time, let's move in." There we were, moving in, Frances taking the lead with bright yellow programmes in hand. She went straight to the tables, distributed new programmes, a gentleman (talkative gentleman, I think it was Frank Pieters) laughed, he thought it was a joke. The President's (Ab Vonkeman) face was red. He had this big gavel that he was unable to use because he was no longer the President for the evening. After Bill Connelly, the Sergeant-at-arms called the meeting to order, Susan with her small gavel took control.

This odd thing about this raid was that – this is a men-only club, but here an invading president, timekeeper, Petro Hartsliel, Table Topics Master, Cooks Dauth, Toastmaster of the evening, Frances Boshoff – all women. If that is not to rub salt in an open wound, then it is pouring a spirit in the cornea of the eye.

However, the evening went extremely well, because it was so well organised although Ab was tense, he ended up enjoying and making a joke about the raid. Well done Vital Communicators. When it happens next time, be part of it.

Keep on communicating!



Ab Vonkeman, President—Forum & Susan le Roux, President—Vital Communicators

Language - Do's and Don'ts

Cooks Dauth

Apart from "Uhms" and "Ahs" the most common mistake is the use or misuse of the "is" and "are" and also "was" and "were". We all know that ...

Present tense single = "is"
Present tense plural = "are"
Past tense single = "was"
Past tense plural = "were"

... but do we use them correctly? No, not always, especially when "I" must also be accommodated.

Present	Past
I am	I was
But he/she is	He/she was
They are	The were

Admittedly the above can be very confusing for those with English as a 2nd and/or 3rd language.

There is nothing worse than the following:

Someone is telling a story and keeps saying: "You know" – No, I don't know, you tell me!

Had the listener know, there would be no necessity for the storyteller to tell the story, not so? Other superfluous interjections are: "Get it", "Okay", "Alright", "Man" and don't forget "They say!" Who are they?

"NICE" is a nice word, but not descriptive. Instead you could use pleasant, likeable, agreeable, good-natured, friendly, kind, sociable, cordial, neighbourly, genial, proper, well-behaved, delightful, gracious, amiable, affable, etc.

There are still convivial, amicable, approachable, congenial, personable, and more ...

Probably the most overused word in the English language is "VERY". There is more than 50 synonyms i.e. absolutely, acutely, amazingly, downright, quite, truly,

Let's spice up our language and start using more descriptive words and the correct use of is/are, was/were.

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Spotlight on Cooks Dauth

Try anything and enjoy what you do is Cooks' motto.

Cooks was born on the 12th of November in Vryburg to a mixture of Scottish and French parentage. She matriculated from Vryburg High and went on to study at the Cape Town College to become a teacher in commercial subjects. After completing her teacher's diploma, Cooks continued her studies at the University of Cape Town where she completed a BCom degree.

After college she tried her hand at teaching, however, hated it too much ... she says she was too young.

Upon joining the Department of Foreign Affairs she was posted to Berne. She met her husband, Dick, on a train while traveling to Cape Town. They were engaged for 5 days before they got married. They were married for nearly twenty five years and when he died, says Cooks, he did her out of a silver wedding anniversary.

She worked for a legal firm and resigned after 19 years to travel Europe for six months (without Dick). Cooks never quit training and obtained an Ikebana Teachers Certificate from Sogetsu Kaikan in Tokyo, did PanAm Training in New York, obtained RSCDS Teachers certificate from St Andrews Scotland, studied Calligraphy in Pretoria and much more.

After completing her studies in Japan, a travel agency recruited her to guide tours. As a seasoned tour guide Cooks traveled the world i.e. she toured with groups from Cape to Cairo, criss-crossed Europe – summer and winter, the Far East, South America, the United States, the British Isles, Scandinavian countries, Australia, New Zealand, Seychelles and India to mention a few.

Cooks says traveled with all the airlines, from A-Z (Aeroflot to Zimbabwean Air). After twenty years of living from her suitcase she decided to go back to teaching ... this time not commercial subjects but rather travel and tourism at Pretoria Technicon, Damelin and the University of Pretoria.

For fun she loves to hike and did the Elephant and Lions Trails, loves bird watching – especially when her dog does not chase them away. She further loves gardening; nothing formal, just containers, hanging baskets and mild and free flowering gardens.

As she grew up at the coast – Cape Town and St Andrews – deep sea fishing and the sea are part of her. Meditation is fulfilling to the soul – especially before the sun rises. She loves to do stained glass work, but sadly only have two pieces as the rest were done to order.

Scottish dancing is another favourite. She started to dance when she was about 4 years old. With the support of two friends started Scottish Country Dancing in Pretoria 33 years ago when she was the first St Andrews's qualified teacher in Pretoria. The club is still going strong. Cooks also does Pergamano which is working with parchment.

Cooks says she also did modelling and loved Spanish Ballroom Dancing; however an accident and a knee replacement put paid to the lovely dance form as well as ice skating and horse riding.

She still reads at least 3 books a month if time permits and at the moment does not get enough time for tapestry or embroidery and says she got out of playing bridge when Toastmasters took over.

Cooks enjoys the Youth Leadership courses and says she learns something new at every session. She is a past president of Vital Communicators and also a past Area Governor for Area A1. She has missed very few conferences.

She loves socializing and every so often visits a casino. Her great love is opera and ballet. She says she is not a great sportswomen, however got colours in hockey. She says her niece annexed her Raleigh sports bicycle and this is the only reason she is no longer cycling.

Cooks is moving back to her beloved ocean, with a cottage near the sea, a beautiful view of Pumlula and a fair-sized garden for her pots and dog. Her niece is about 5km from the cottage and the twin boys of eight offered to help her count the dolphins' eye lashes.

Do dolphins have eye lashes?



Meandercon 8-9 October 2004, Natal Midlands Willem le Roux

Like any other conference, this one was valuable to me in three different areas: It was an opportunity to get to know other Toastmasters and enjoy the social events, there were a lot to learn and lastly it gave us the opportunity to listen to the best speakers in the country during the Humorous Speech Contest.

Set in a secluded conference center in a scenic valley, this offered a wonderful opportunity to socialize with fellow Toastmasters from all over the country. Friday night we kicked off with a wine tasting and potjiekos evening, while Saturday night offered whiskey tasting and a banquet. We enjoyed excellent food at all the meals. These events definitely helped to loosen the tongues and set the ambience for the weekend.

During the Saturday we all had the challenge to find the solution to a murder mystery which unfolded piece by piece by the characters acting out the story, dressed up in beautiful Victorian dress.

On Saturday the program started with an inspirational presentation by a "silent speaker" – Steve Barnett, using mime, and music to entertain us. The program was spiced up with a very interesting educational presentation on team building by Adolph Keastner.

On Sunday morning everyone was invited to a further workshop, this time on management, also by Adolph Keastner. This was of inestimable value for anyone interested in the leadership track in Toastmasters.

As usual, the Humorous Speech Contest was the highlight of the conference. Dave Cairns, who represented Division A, ones again walked away with the laurels. At the banquet on Saturday evening Douglas Kruger entertained us with the winning speeches which he gave at the International Speech Contest in America where he came second in the world.

If you do not wish to miss out on these valuable learning experiences in future, make sure you are booked for the Maxicon at the Waterfront in May in Cape Town.



Tall Tales Contestants

Susan le Roux (Contest Chairman), Willem le Roux, Salome & Graeme Peddle, Brain Tomlin, Chris Pagel