

Welcome, New Member!

Welcome to the Austin Toastmasters! We are glad you joined. We have created the following checklist to make sure your membership gets started off right. If you have any questions along the way, please let us know!

- ❑ First you will fill out the membership application and turn it in to the VP Membership, along with a check for your dues.
- ❑ After processing your application, Toastmasters International will send you two manuals in the mail: The Competent Communicator and Competent Leader manuals. These manuals will help guide you through your first 10 speeches and the various meeting roles you will play. While you are waiting, you may request a copy of the first 2 speaking projects from the Sergeant at Arms.
- ❑ We will ask you for your current contact information, including your e-mail address. We will add your information to the club roster, and give you the password for access to the password-protected area on our website that contains the roster. Your contact information will never be distributed outside the club.
- ❑ You will receive an e-mail each week that contains a recap of the last Toastmasters meeting and information about the next Toastmasters meeting.
- ❑ Would you like to have a mentor? If so, please notify the current VP Education. If you have someone in mind that you would like as a mentor, we will see if it can be arranged. If not, we will assign an experienced and enthusiastic Toastmaster to serve as your mentor.
- ❑ Finally, you will need to schedule your first speech, which is called the "Ice Breaker." It is a short speech (4-6 minutes). It will help us get to know you a little better. To get on the schedule, put your name on the sign up sheet that is passed around at every meeting. Or contact the current VP Education about finding a slot for you.

We are looking forward to working with you!

January - June 2008 Club Officers:

President, Scotty Burch

Vice President of Education, Tonja O'Neill

Vice President of Membership, Trey Gramann

Vice President of Public Relations, Jeff Piatt

Secretary/Librarian, Erhan Cokal

Treasurer, Fei Dai

Sergeant at Arms, Kenneth Estes

<http://www.austintoastmasters.org>

<http://www.toastmasters.org>

What to Expect at a Toastmasters Meeting

A typical Toastmasters meeting goes something like this, with each designated role contributing to the agenda:

President: The Club President (or presiding officer) calls the meeting to order.

Invoker: The Invocator gives an invocation, usually a brief, thoughtful quote or passage.

Toastmaster: The Toastmaster of the day leads the meeting, calling on the various roles in the correct order, and maintains the time constraints of the meeting. The Toastmaster will

- 1) open the meeting by introducing each of the supporting roles, and allow each role to provide a brief introduction of their role,
- 2) introduce each prepared Speaker and the General Evaluator in turn, and
- 3) before closing the meeting, award the ribbons for the best speakers of the meeting.

Table Topics: The Table Topics Master prepares several questions, usually based on a given theme for the meeting. Toastmasters - preferably those without another role in the meeting - are chosen to speak extemporaneously on the topics, with a time requirement of 1 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. After the topics are completed, a timer report is requested, and votes are cast.

Speakers: Speakers present the speeches they have prepared, in the order called by the Toastmaster. Most of the speeches are designed to help the speaker move up the Toastmasters education ladder by fulfilling a specific speech requirement from one of the Toastmasters manuals. After the speeches are complete, a timer report is requested, and votes are cast by the members and guests.

General Evaluator: The General Evaluator leads the evaluation portion of the meeting, calling upon the assigned evaluators in turn. After evaluations, a timer report is requested for each evaluator, and votes are cast. The Ah Counter and Grammarian reports are requested, and a brief evaluation of the overall meeting is delivered. An award is also given by the General Evaluator for Most Enthusiastic member for the week.

Evaluations: Designated Evaluators give evaluations of prepared speeches, providing both positive feedback and suggestions for improvement. Evaluators use the guidelines and criteria for the speech as provided in the manual which is being used by the speaker.

Grammarian & Ah Counter (Gramm-Ah): The Gramm-Ah presents a word of the day at the opening of the meeting that Toastmasters will try to incorporate into their communications during the meeting. Throughout the meeting, the Gramm-Ah listens for filler words (e.g., ah, um, kindof, ya' know) and improper or unique use of the English language. When called upon by the General Evaluator, the Grammarian provides a brief report of the speakers' uses of filler words, use of English, and use of the word of the day.

Timer: The Timer records the speaking time of each speaker. The Timer is called upon after the completion of each major agenda section - table topics, prepared speeches, and then evaluations - to report on whether the speakers are eligible for voting. (Speakers who do not reach the minimum time or exceed the maximum time are not eligible for an award.)

Voting: The Vote Counter collects and counts the votes after each designated agenda item is complete. Attendees vote for Best Speaker, Best Table Topic, and Best Evaluator as the meeting progresses.

Announcements and Awards Presentation: Control of the meeting will be returned to the Toastmaster by the General Evaluator. The Toastmaster will then award the meeting's best Speaker, Evaluator, and Table Topics speaker. With the meeting agenda completed, the Toastmaster will return control of the meeting to the presiding officer.

Adjourn: The presiding officer calls on guests and unspoken Toastmasters to share their [brief] thoughts on the meeting, then makes club announcements, and calls for a preview of the agenda and assigned roles for the next meeting. The presiding officer then adjourns the meeting.

For more information about Austin Toastmasters , please visit our website!

<http://www.austintoastmasters.org>

What Makes The Austin Toastmasters Unique

We often boast that we are "The Greatest Toastmasters Club in the Known Universe!" It's our modest little internal motivational motto which demands our very best every week. We do a great job developing people as communicators and leaders, and here are a few other reasons why:

Size: Our larger membership makes for lively meetings that bring a great diversity of topics, talents, speaking styles, and perspectives. We are one of just a few clubs in the Austin-San Marcos area that consistently has more than 40 members.

Video Camera: Our club has its own video camera, which is a fantastic tool for each member to assess their own speaking ability and gauge improvement. Another interesting use is to focus on non-verbal communication by watching yourself with the sound off!

Communication Achievement Award: Each year The Austin Toastmasters presents our Communication Achievement Award to an individual in the Austin-area who has achieved career excellence through superior communication skills. Our club has recognized politicians, writers, news anchors, and many other professionals who have exemplified great speaking.

The prestigious list of recipients makes this an award that honored communicators are proud to receive. Honorees are presented with the award and speak at the annual banquet in June.

Social Nature: In addition to our ongoing meetings, we have weekly Post-Meeting Socials, an annual miniature golf tournament, awards banquet, and white elephant holiday party, occasional birthday parties, and other opportunities for socializing. We have a lot of fun both at our meetings and outside them, and we strive to get to know one another as individuals.

Web Site: Our club has a great Web site which serves as a repository for our history, a channel of communication for members, and a means of attracting new people into the club.

Track Record of Excellence: The evidence of our rich tradition is the sheer number of Awards and Ribbons on our Banner, which is unmatched by any other club in our District, in our Region, and possibly in the known universe. Our banner is so heavily laden with history that it is handled carefully due to its weight and volume of awards.



Club Contests: We have two sets of speech contests each year, in February and August. The International Speech contest and another speech contest chosen by the District are held in February. The Humorous Speech contest and another speech contest chosen by the District are held in August. The winners of these contests go on to represent our club at the Area level, where they compete with winners from 4-5 other clubs. Winners at the Area level proceed to the Division Contest, and so on up the Toastmaster hierarchy until one winner is finally chosen. The International Speech contest advances to an international level and the winner is deemed the World Champion of Public Speaking. All other contests winners are chosen at the District level.

More often than not, the Contests are the best presentations all year! Our winners usually advance 2 or 3 levels, and a few years ago, one of our members was #2 in the world in the International Speech contest. It can't be long until our ranks produce #1!

Annual Awards Banquet: This is the elegant affair of the year, held in June at a top restaurant in Austin (Green Pastures is a frequent choice). We take this time to honor a local luminary with the Communication Achievement Award. Barbara Jordan, Cactus Pryor, Ann Richards, and Kinky Friedman are just a few of our Who's Who list of past honorees. We also recognize our own members with awards for Toastmaster of the Year, Best Speaker, Most Improved Speaker, Best Evaluator, and Best at Table Topics. This is the event where you are most likely to meet the spouses of fellow members, former Austin Toastmasters, Toastmasters from other clubs, and other friends and associates.

Peter Pan Golf Tournament: This annual event usually takes place in May. No skills or equipment are required - just the desire to have some fun with your fellow members. The event is traditionally BYO-Beer and there are a variety of "awards"!

White Elephant Holiday Party: In December, we celebrate the holiday season in style by having this get-together and exchanging white elephant gifts. This is always a fun party, but if you are uninitiated, be forewarned that you may be opening something that would not earn a PG rating. Sure, there are some keeper gifts...1 or 2 each year. Then there's the perennial Chia something-or-other, and who knows what else. We even had someone bring their kitchen sink! We have dinner pot-luck style, giving members a chance to showcase their culinary talents. Caroling is not on the agenda - we're speakers, not singers - but caravans to see the lights on 37th Street have been known to occur.

A Letter from Grace

I wish to propose a Toast to you...Austin Toastmasters. This club chartered on June 1, 1980...almost 28 years ago, and is one of the few clubs in the Austin/San Marcos area that consistently has more than 40 members. We currently have close to 60 members on our roster. We do an incredible job of developing people as communicators and leaders. When I first came to the club in November of 2002, I was terrified. I will never forget my first experience at the lectern trying to address a simple table topic question. Trust me, it wasn't pretty... Now, I am the current Division L Governor, having also served two terms as an Area Governor, and I am planning to run for Lt. Governor of Marketing for the upcoming term. I recently achieved my Distinguished Toastmaster award, too. I owe it all to you...the support and encouragement that this club has offered to me over the past 5-1/2 years, has helped me so much...not only in getting over my fear of public speaking, but also the opportunity to gain leadership skills. Another thing I love about this Club is that we have fun at our meetings, and outside of them. In my District Leadership roles, I have visited over 30 clubs, and I can say with confidence, that I believe the Austin Toastmasters IS the Greatest Toastmaster Club in the Known Universe!

-- Grace Jennings, March 18, 2008