

District 54 Dispatch

July 2010



REFLECTIONS OF THE 2009–2010 DISTRICT LEADERS

Aloysia Mitchell, 2009–2010 District Governor

The 2009–2010 district leadership team was a hard working group who liked to have fun. Our District Executive Committee (DEC) meetings were filled with laughter yet productive. We covered the necessary business efficiently and received training from members of the DTM advanced club. This was our first year of having the DTM club members provide training for area and division governors. Overall it was a success.



We had two awesome district conferences! Both the fall and spring conferences were the highlights of the year. Our conference teams led by Bobby Dillard and Erika Arnhart were a pleasure to work with and they raised the bar for future conferences.

We surpassed our district goals for 3 of our 4 critical success factors. Congratulations to everyone who achieved an educational and leadership award this year. We also surpassed our goal for the number of membership payments. In the upcoming weeks, as Toastmasters International finishes tabulating their final figures for all districts, our numbers in these categories will increase.

Like a roller coaster, this year was filled with ups and downs. Even though we surpassed the goals for 3 of our 4 critical success factors, we did not meet our requirement for total number of paid clubs. As a result, we were not a distinguished district.

Our journey this year has come to a bittersweet conclusion. I hope the following lessons will help us to become a distinguished district in 2010–2011:

- We must nurture each member in order for each club to thrive.
- It is easier to save a struggling club than to charter a new club. We should focus more resources on low member clubs.
- It is okay to say “No.” It is best to honestly assess your time, capabilities and interest before saying “Yes.”

District 54 has dedicated members who can achieve the goal of each club being distinguished. Distinguished clubs lead to a distinguished district. To district governor Martie Ogborn, DTM, her 2010–2011 leadership team and all District 54 club members, I wish the best of success in the year ahead.

Martie Ogborn, 2009–2010 Lt. Governor Education & Training, 2010–2011 District Governor

What an exciting year it has been serving as your lieutenant governor education and training. It has been my pleasure to work with so many of you as we provided the district with amazing educational and training opportunities during the district TLIs and conferences.



I would like to express my appreciation to the summer 2009 and winter 2010 TLI deans: Debra Toohill, LuAnn Larson, Tony Hughes, Dan Rowe, Jim Dixon, and Chuck Stickney. District Conferences were especially fun and inspiring thanks to fall conference chair Bobby Dillard and spring conference chair Erika Arnhart, who both showed fantastic leadership!

I was also privileged to work with Aloysia Mitchell (district governor), Dan Kyburz (lieutenant governor marketing), Bob Grenier (immediate past district governor), and Sean Harrison (PR officer) as we fulfilled this year’s district theme: “Empower People to Prosper.” As of June 25th there were 131 CC awards, 50 AC awards, and 89 leadership awards registered at Toastmasters International—lots of power in these accomplishments! Woo-hoo!

Things I learned this past year included the incredible willingness of so many Toastmasters to learn and grow, how we are all doing our very best with the time and talent we have, and how together we have exemplified this year’s Toastmasters International theme: “Confidence, Leadership, Service.”

It’s time for the changing of the guards and I am praying I will fill the role as your district governor with the diplomacy and poise our 2009–2010 district governor, Aloysia Mitchell, so aptly demonstrated. With the new role comes a new woo-hoo bear (blue) to cheer us all on as we all “R.I.S.E to the Possibilities!” (District 54 theme for 2010–2011). Let’s work together to fulfill the Toastmasters International theme for 2010–2011: “Toastmasters: Achieving Greatness Together!”



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Sean Harrison, 2009–2010 PR Officer

When I began the year as PR officer, I had several goals for the publicity of the district:

- Do an excellent newsletter.
- Improve the district website.
- Do excellent photography.
- Write a district blog.
- Provide a forum for VPs PR.



A good newsletter is one of the old, old tools for publicity. So this year I focused on the newsletter, so that members and officers would have a connection with the goings-on of the district. One of the things I appreciated most about the district leadership team this year is that they were always ready and willing to provide articles, and they did a great job as writers! Communications skills do indeed transfer from speaking to writing!

An excellent website is another aspect of professional publicity. Unfortunately, the old website software crashed hard, never to recover. Fortunately, we had already assembled a team and were talking about building a new website. When the website crashed, our team swung into action: I redirected the website to our district blog and kept the district informed through it, while Eric Michalsen (the new district webmaster) built and launched the new website. The new system is a great improvement! The incoming team now has a solid foundation on which to build the district's online presence. <http://toastmastersd54.org>.

District photographers Lyndon Rich and Sean Harrison created excellent photographs of district events, including professional portraits for each of the top-three officers. You can see the District 54 photo gallery at <http://picasaweb.google.com/ToastmastersD54>.

Every district needs an active blog, so I created a district blog (<http://toastmastersd54.blogspot.com>) and began posting. The blog became a lifeline while the district website was down. Now the website has its own tools, so we can look forward to reading district news there.

I started the year with the idea that public relations could be a "conversation." I hoped that members and officers would comment on the blog, and I tried to start a public relations mailing list for the club PR officers. I was surprised at how hard it was to get interaction flowing. Ultimately, the blog received very few comments, and the PR list died a very quick and painless death. *Rest in peace.*

There's an opportunity here, I'm convinced. We have a wonderful community in District 54, but most of the members (and even the officers) in the local clubs are unaware of it. We want to help club members and officers join the larger District 54 community, and the use of online interaction can be an outstanding way to facilitate that. I recommend developing a long-term strategy to bring the club members and officers into participation in the larger District 54 community. Designing and implementing such a strategy will result in greater involvement in the district, better conference attendance, and such unquantifiables as greater enthusiasm for Toastmasters,

TRAINING FOR CLUB OFFICERS

Martie Ogborn, District Governor

For Toastmasters clubs to be successful, club officers need the knowledge and tools provided by club officer training. Trained club officers can result in more satisfied members, more exciting club meetings, and more new members, a triple play! The District doesn't want you to strike out, so . . . we are going to make it a home run! Every club will receive an envelope full of marketing material and a membership building CD. To pick up your club's envelope, stop by the district store at any of the TLIs.

Club members don't have to be an officer to attend club officer training. Everyone is welcome AND There is NO COST. TLIs provide:

- Training sessions for club officers
- Educational sessions for members and guests
- Opportunities to meet district leaders and club officers
- Refreshments
- The marketing materials envelope for your club

Club Officer Training will be offered at three TLIs in July. Follow the links to on-line registration, don't miss out!

Event	Date	Location	Dean
TLI South	July 10, 2010	Normal, IL	Nicole Shake
TLI West	July 17, 2010	Moline, IL	Jeffrey Carl
TLI North	July 31, 2010	Delnor Hospital	Ron Jones

leading to more clubs, more educational accomplishments, and greater health and well-being of the district.

I am so thankful for the opportunity to serve District 54 as the PR officer this past year. It was an incredible learning experience for me, and I am truly blessed to have served with the 2009–2010 team. What an energetic and efficient group of people! I wish the incoming team all the best, and hope that you, too, have a wonderful year.

Mary Peterson, 2009–2010 Secretary

"What have I gotten myself into?!" Serving as 2009–2010 District 54 Secretary was an opportunity heavily laden with growth potential. I was surprised at how "on" one had to be during the entire DEC meeting to get down all that happened. What a rush! So much was my amazement that after completing note-taking at my first meeting as secretary, I inwardly questioned my sanity in committing to such a responsibility.

Despite the initial shock, I persevered, became ultra-organized, and was able to sharpen my listening skills and develop a level of competency in my office. To have some more fun with the role, I shared uplifting quotes from notable people about "mistakes" as I called for corrections to the meeting minutes.

Not only did I enjoy the District Secretary experience as a way to conquer a challenge, I also reveled in expanding my Toastmasters knowledge and soaking in the illustrious company.

I love absorbing knowledge—about anything. As I took on the District Secretary role, I was excited to get a first-hand look at the inner workings of Toastmasters at the district

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level. The importance of all the things we were asked to do at the club level was illuminated.

For example, why did we have to have club officer meetings with the area governor? I hadn't realized what a motivating factor it was as the area governor met with and encouraged the club to meet their goals by providing committed support to help its members improve their communication skills.

There's nothing more contagious than a group of motivated people. That's what I will miss the most as my district secretary tenure has drawn to a close. Yes, the "rush" of the DEC meeting was exhilarating, and gaining the inside knowledge of Toastmasters was stimulating, but, as now-District Governor Martie Ogborn reminded us this past year, it's all about the people. Being among people who, having reaped the benefits of Toastmasters themselves, were so focused on working together toward a common goal—spreading the word about Toastmasters—was the ultimate experience.

District leadership--get yourself into it!

Joseph Wilhelmi, 2009–2010 Sergeant-at-Arms

My term as sergeant-at-arms began in the 2008–2009 year, I continued in the 2009–2010 year, and will conclude in the 2010–2011 year. During this period, which will be a total of 3 years, I have learned that mentoring is needed. This process was important, not only for me, and the future sergeant-at-arms, but for the district as well. Protocol and decorum are necessary for meetings, as well as set up. This includes being able to set up at conferences and other meetings, and we must ensure safety. Crawling on floors and taping down power cords is part of the job, whether we enjoy it or not.

When I began, I had little training, and the supplies were not in proper containers. I asked for and received a small budget to store district items properly so that damage to supplies would be minimized.

I began to think on how to transition the position to a younger, more physically able person who could engage in the set-up process without the hardships we older gentlemen experience, especially with my physical limitations that seem to be growing monthly. I engaged a younger, more physically able person to be co-sergeant-at-arms this final year. We will work together this year, learning and developing the office of sergeant-at-arms. Each year moving forward, a co-sergeant-at-arms would be a way to allow each sergeant-at-arms time to mentor and teach someone in the office for the future, allowing for those circumstances that occur as life happens.

Shular Scudamore, Division A Governor

When I was asked if I would accept the nomination as Division A Governor, I asked a few questions. I wondered if I would be able to do the job well without having served as an area governor first. Being an area governor is not a prerequisite. It certainly is useful experience, but it is not required. On the plus side I was serving as district secretary at the time, giving me an opportunity to hear the monthly division reports and understand something of the division governor's role.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

July 10, 2010 is the deadline for expense reimbursement for 2009-2010 district leaders. Expense reports can be found on the District website at <http://toastmastersd54.org> and can either be emailed to ageorge100@hotmail.com or mailed to Aloysia Mitchell, 2021 W. Richwoods Blvd. Peoria, IL 61604.

As I am completing the year, I see that there are areas where I can improve, particularly in communication with my area governors. I would like to have had a division council meeting to share ideas among the areas, and to have made club visits. It appears that all three areas will be distinguished. This is because of the hard work of the area governors, nothing that I did as the division governor. Their success is because of the success of their clubs. The clubs success is because members are completing their goals. As Chip and Dan Heath write in their book *Switch*, "We need to find out what is working and do more of it." That statement reminds me of Toastmasters, helping people identify and build on their strengths.

I have enjoyed working with the area governors. They have done a great job meeting their goals. Each one has worked, encouraging their clubs and meeting the goals that make the division succeed. Our division contests went very well because of the clubs and people who stepped up to help.

When I joined Toastmasters a little more than five years ago, I had no knowledge of any of the opportunities beyond the local club or even opportunities for developing leadership skills within the local club. I continually tell the college students in my classes about Toastmasters. The growth of our clubs, areas, divisions and district is up to us. We just need to let friends, family and co-workers know about our own experiences. Do more than invite someone; pick them up for a meeting. It works, let's do more of it.

Bobby Dillard, 2009–2010 Division B Governor

I've had a great time this year as the Division B governor, not unlike my two years as an area governor. I will repeat the division governor role for one more year, having learned many lessons in my previous year and with the intent of improving my performance. Maybe this time I'll get it right.



Working in a leadership capacity in District 54 may be one of the best decisions that I have made since becoming a Toastmaster. Leadership at the district level has opened new doors of opportunity for me. I've made many friends that I cherish and hold dear. And, the life lessons learned have been invaluable in my work and personal life.

Getting to meet new people and getting to enjoy the variety of club experiences throughout the District have been the best parts of District leadership for me. If you want to enhance your Toastmasters experience and move to the next level, then visit other clubs, go to conferences and Toastmas-

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ter Leadership Institutes (TLIs), and volunteer to participate in a District leadership capacity. I promise you won't regret it.

My focus for next year will be membership. I am amazed at the number of clubs that work so hard to reach being a distinguished club, only to be thwarted from reaching their goal by not attaining their membership requirement.

It will be my intention in the coming year to discover what experiences attract and keep new members, to seek methods to increase communications in and between clubs, and to look for ways to increase the "sense of community" that each club possesses. So don't be surprised when I visit your club that I am full of questions. I believe that, with the right focus and a little sweat equity, we can succeed in significantly increasing our members.

Joseph Wilhelmi, 2009–2010 Division E Governor

During my tenure as Division E Governor, I took a different approach that was, on reflection, the right approach.

I observed clubs and held a CSI (Club Success Institute) that was not well attended. I did not interject, but allowed the area governors to participate in the process of energizing Division E, and continued to analyze as I took reports from the area governors, along with other interactive data. I made the following discoveries.

All of Division E is made up of community clubs, not corporate clubs like some divisions. Thus the culture is different in many respects, especially in concepts, education and procedures. Some clubs have not progressed beyond the 1980s model of Toastmasters. During the early 1990s, a new wave of technologies were emerging. They allowed faster more deliberate ways of communication. As this wave was moving, corporate employees were forced to adopt to the cultural and communications changes if they wanted to remain competitive and to have a job. They had to embrace the changes no matter how fast and undesired, yet the result was more efficient communication and productivity.

All of our clubs need to embrace the new Toastmasters model. We are a people business, and will attract those people that want to improve themselves. We want to attract young, vibrant people that do embrace change and can adopt to environments quickly. Moving forward we must set our clubs up for success in leadership and communications geared toward the individual. We are a people business first, and success is what each person wants who joins a Toastmaster Club.

Lauran Bell Harrison, 2009–2010 Area 12 Governor

I began my term as Area Governor (AG) with three goals: (1) to finish my area club visits early in the semester (if a club needs help, the earlier I understood that, the better District 54's officers could support the club in a timely way); (2) to respond quickly and follow up at least three times if a club officer reported, "We're in trouble; our club needs help"; and (3) to create an area council.



HOW DISTRICT 54 DID IN 2009-2010

Martie Ogborn, District Governor

Members

3119	Member semi-annual payments
73	Paid clubs
142	CC awards
60	AC awards
98	Leadership awards

Clubs

11	Distinguished Clubs
13	Select Distinguished Clubs
14	President's Distinguished Clubs

Areas

9	Distinguished Areas
4	Select Distinguished Areas
1	President's Distinguished Areas

Divisions

2	Select Distinguished Divisions
1	President's Distinguished Division

District 54 is

Ranked 39th (of 81) in the world
Ranked 4th (of 8) in Region 5

Fox Valley Toastmasters' president, Pat Reisdorf, had told me last year that she wished, as an officer, for a way to connect with those holding the same office in other clubs. When Pat expressed that, I remembered that the very best TLI (Toastmasters Leadership Institute) I had ever attended as an officer was one where the club officers discussed various challenges and shared solutions that had worked for them. I also remembered that when I was a fairly new Toastmaster and a club president, I had felt rather isolated and adrift as I struggled to figure out how to do my job effectively and had longed for the same thing Pat had wished for.

My predecessor, Maryann Reichelt, had mentioned that our area had never had an area council, so, with a wide open door, I determined to form an Area Council that was geared primarily to giving our Area officers an opportunity to connect with one another. I believed that, if the meetings were simply reporting a list of facts and information that could be sent in an e-mail, then coming to a meeting would be a waste of time. I believed, instead, that the presidents and vice presidents of the different clubs needed to get in the same room together and be asked some open ended questions.

What went well? I visited most of the clubs in July 2009 to install the officers. The installation ceremony as presented in the club president and AG manuals went beautifully. I encourage all area governors to follow it with confidence. My club visits also went well. I completed the first round early in the process, except for one club with a meeting time I could not attend last fall. But I recruited a good assistant AG, Vince Treague, who completed that visit for me, and I spent time on the phone with the club's president, so the district/club relationship was established. I decided to spread out the second round a little more, but still got the visits in pretty early. It helped. This spring I also visited a club that was not on my AG list, The Delnor Club, a community club getting

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ready to charter, because I thought they should also have AG support and connection with the district representative even though they still need several members to charter.

As a result of the early contacts with clubs, I learned that my area had three clubs that were in need of help. First, Listen, Learn and Lead (LLL) had already been assigned club coaches, and had risen from three to eight members. During this year, LLL changed location to the Gail Borden Library in Elgin and saw its membership quickly grow to eighteen members. It is now a vibrant, growing club.

The other two clubs with low membership were Toast of the Fox (TotF), and Advanced Expressives (AE). I kept in touch with them and with the district, following up on the need, and didn't assume that if I had reported the need that it was taken care of. Both clubs were assigned club coaches, and both have been recognized this June as distinguished clubs, the measuring stick Toastmasters International uses to determine whether a coach has been successful. Both clubs still need more members and more growth, but they have done a beautiful job and have a wonderful product to offer prospective members.

The club officers and I established an area council. We met at a midpoint location three times each semester (not every month, because I wanted to respect the officers' time and home lives). My job was to facilitate the discussion among the council members. The months we had area contests, we met a week or so before the contest, and included discussion of how best to assist the host club. The months we had conferences we did not hold an area council meeting.

We started each meeting with introductions (name, club, office) and answering one or all of four questions: What's working well for your club? What challenges are you facing? What is one question you would like to ask a more experienced Toastmaster? (And another question that varied according to the need.) The council members proceeded to help each other, sharing their experiences—what worked, what didn't work, and how to serve their clubs better. Not only did many of the officers come, but they asked for more council meetings. Immediate past area governor Maryann Reichelt was a member of our area council, and she said "Those area council meetings rock!"

What did I learn for the future?

1. Monitor officer training needs more closely; several of my clubs missed that goal by one person.
 2. We needed a secretary at the area council meetings to take notes and send them out by email. Next time I'd like to ask each club to provide a secretary for one or two meetings. It could provide an opportunity for younger officers to connect with other clubs and the district, as well as to begin learning the ropes for serving as president or VP education themselves.
 3. I recruited an assistant AG who was more experienced than I was (Vince Treague, DTM). He nudged me along and asked me hard questions. I would absolutely do that again.
- Five of our clubs reached distinguished this year, and the sixth was very close. They are growing, stronger and healthier than

they were a year ago. I attribute that in no small measure to working with an excellent team, with great officers both at the club and district levels, and to the mentorship of Maryann, Vince, and Martie Ogborne. What a excellent learning experience this has been. Thank you all for an amazing year!

Paul Mueller, 2009–2010 Area 21 Governor

Besides the goal of achieving at least distinguished status for Area 21, I set a goal for myself to find my replacement for the coming year. I got agreement from an incoming club president to serve as an assistant area governor. This Toastmaster was able to attend the district officer training with me. All was ready roll on July 1, 2009. However, work and other priorities prevented my assistant from becoming really active. During my first round of area governor visits I observed that one of my club presidents had several really admirable leadership skills and invited him to be my successor. He will serve as area governor, and I will serve the District in another capacity for the coming year.

Darrel Felty, 2009–2010 Area 32 Governor

As Area 32 Governor, I set all the regular goals for an area: All clubs distinguished, all clubs at or above charter strength, active boards, members making desired progress. I also set a personal goal, to try to get the members to work outside the club. This could be in contests, in visits to other clubs, or even becoming a dual member and joining another club. But the number one way to help the club and themselves by working outside the club is to work on inviting people to a meeting. That will help them to grow, and will help to fill a meeting, and will definitely result in more members for the club. If you want to be a better speaker, get outside the club!

I found limited success with this approach—the clubs that were able to step up found improved results.

I am encouraging everyone not to be a spectator but to get into the arena. Teddy Roosevelt said, in a speech at the Sorbonne, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat." Join us in the Arena!

GOAL SETTING AND PLANNING

Leadership Excellence Series

Great leaders are always growing and expanding into new areas. They know what they want, and they devise ways to get it. The secret to their success is their ability to set and achieve specific goals.

A goal is a specific objective you and your team must achieve. A plan is a blueprint for achieving these goals. The abilities to set clear goals and plan how to achieve them are important leadership skills. If you cannot identify and communicate goals and plan how to achieve them, you will have difficulty fulfilling other leadership responsibilities.

Goals shouldn't be grand or complex. They need only be statements of results you hope to achieve.

A goal has several characteristics. It is:

- **Specific.** It clearly states what must happen.
- **Measurable.** Results can be easily validated.
- **Action-oriented.** It begins with the word "to," followed by a verb.
- **Realistic.** It is challenging, yet practical and achievable. People won't strive to achieve goals that are set unrealistically high, nor will they be motivated to achieve a goal that is set too low.
- **Time-bounded.** It contains a timetable for achievement.

Involve team members in setting goals. People increase commitment to goals when they are involved in setting them. They develop a sense of ownership and will take responsibility for results once they have a personal stake in them.

For best results, write each goal. This will make a goal easier to remember. It also will be easier to track your progress toward it.

Once you've written a goal, consider what you must do to achieve it. What problems or obstacles could you encounter? By identifying and resolving potential conflicts now, you will be able to focus on the goal.

Regularly review progress toward the goal. Are you where you should be in accomplishing it? If so, great. If not, determine the reason for the delay, then take action.

A plan describes how a goal will be achieved. It provides the structure needed to accomplish daily organizational activities. A plan outlines the necessary activities, the resources to be allocated, and how the work will be assigned. It gives guidance and direction to everyone involved in achieving the goal. A plan ensures the objective will be achieved efficiently and effectively.

Planning is important for several reasons:

- **Planning makes leaders more future-oriented.** They are forced to look beyond the present to project what will happen in the future.
- **Planning enables leaders to coordinate decisions.** Decisions should not be made without considering their effects on the future.
- **Planning reinforces goals.** Planning puts goals in the forefront. Since goals are the starting points for plans, leaders always remember their goals.

Steps to Effective Goal Setting

- Determine your top five values and prioritize them.
- Determine your mission or purpose in life. If you don't have a purpose, make finding your purpose your goal. Then write a mission statement that incorporates your values.
- Make up your dreams list.
- From your dreams list pick a goal in each of the following areas: financial/career, personal (physical and mental fitness), recreational, family, emotional, intellectual, and finally, a thing goal.
- On a single sheet of paper, write out your goal with a date for completion and the steps or objectives required to meet your goal.
- Write each goal on one 3 x 5 card.
- Affirmations: on the same 3 x 5 card for each goal, write one or two affirmations about your goal. Visualize your goal as already being achieved in the present. Twice daily, review your goals and affirmations.

- **Planning ensures efficient use of resources.** Leaders make wise use of manpower and materials.

Once goals are determined, the planning process can be broken down into five easy steps.

1. **Establish strategies.** Identify how you will achieve the goal. List the specific steps that must be taken to move toward the goal.
2. **Set a timetable.** Priorities and scheduling are critical to planning. Make a list of tasks according to their priority and establish specific deadlines for their completion.
3. **Assign responsibilities.** Delegate tasks to the team, matching the task to the person best suited for it. Your team's success depends on every member fulfilling their responsibilities. Be sure that each team member commits to completing his or her assigned duties.
4. **Anticipate obstacles.** Good leaders anticipate problems.
5. **Modify the plan as necessary.** Even leaders with the most vivid imaginations cannot possibly imagine all of the challenges or problems that may occur as a team strives to achieve its goals. Leaders must be flexible and change plans as needed.

As in setting goals, you should involve team members in the planning process. Participation allows them to exercise their creativity and problem-solving skills and will increase their commitment to achieving the established goals.

Careful goal-setting and planning are the keys to achieving results and to making you a successful leader. By using the information we discussed today, you will be able to set goals and develop plans that will result in achieving those goals.