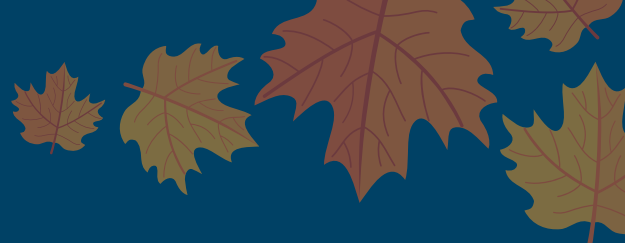




DISTRICT 47
SOUTH FLORIDA AND
THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS



THE SUNSHINER

Issue 2 October 2026



A Fresh Fall Look.

A Stronger Voice for District 47

IN THIS ISSUE

Vision D47: Tune In — High-Definition Stories. Wide-Range Reach.

HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to the Fall edition of our The Sunshiner newsmagazine.

Check out District 47's NEW FALL LOOK on page 7.

Get acquainted with D47's Parliamentarian, Administration Manager and Logistics Manager on pages 12-14.

Have questions that need answers? Well, check out our new QTNA section on pages 17-18.

Look what's been happening in the District with submissions to our DIVISION DISPATCHES section on pages 30-49.

Celebrate at the Hall of Fames page 50.

pages 19-21



2026 Convention Vancouver, Canada



THE TRIO PREMIERE

Happy fall, All! The broadcast is live, and our Trio has dialed in to ignite our movement toward greatness! Tune in to this fall edition's updates from the Trio, District Director Dr. Susan Vineta, DTM; Program Quality Director Oris Martin, DTM; and Club Growth Director Linda Clarke, DTM 🎤📡🌟



**A NOTE FROM
THE EDITOR**



Andrea Robinson, DTM
THE SUNSHINER EDITOR
2026-2027

Happy Fall Fellow Toastmasters of District 47!

The Sunshiner has always brought to you information about our clubs and members who do memorable and interesting things in District 47. We're Toastmasters and we're accustomed to being spectacular.

This year, we're taking that mandate farther. We are more intentional this year about educating our audience about the inner-workings of Toastmasters International in language that is easily understood. Every company and organization has procedures and processes they follow to keep things operating smoothly and in order. Just like life, without order situations dissolve into chaos.

Do you understand Toastmaster International's procedures? Do you think of these things? Also, do you know the meaning of TLI, COT, AD, DTM, PQD and the myriad acronyms some seasoned members use fluidly and frequently?

We are communicators, but we use a language that may frustrate newer members because we don't fully explain what we mean. Starting this issue we debut a column called Questions That Need Answers (QTNA), a feature where we interview District and Toastmaster International leaders about their roles and responsibilities and let them explain some of the processes that go into running a credible and dynamic organization. We kick things off with Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) Lois Margolin, a Past District 47 Director and current Region Advisor (RA) for Region 7. You're in for a treat with reading her words of wisdom.

We welcome other leaders and veteran members to volunteer to respond to our questions for an upcoming QTNA. Please email us at sunshiner@toastmastersd47.org. Please include your name and Toastmasters role, along with your Club name and Division. Explain why you're positioned to educate our audience.

Educating minds is what we do. Help us do this. Namaste.

MEET THE TEAM



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CHIEF DESIGN EDITOR
2026-2027



Sandra L. Jackson, DTM
COPY EDITOR
2026-2027



Claudia Zapata
SUNSHINER GRAPHICS DESIGNER
2026-2027

A Fresh Fall Look for District 47

Ancin B. Munnings, DTM
Immediate Past District Director

My fellow Toastmasters! If you've known District 47 for some time, then you'll have noticed that our map looks a bit different this year.



You see all these colorful pins? Those represent the location of clubs and areas that make up our District. From the 2026-2027 Toastmasters year onwards, Southwest Florida has come under the jurisdiction of District 47. Clubs in places such as Bradenton, Sarasota, Fort Myers, and Naples are now within our district. We also welcomed a club from Vero Beach (Beachsiders Toastmasters) to join us alongside our clubs in Southeast Florida and in The Bahamas.

Triple A, why this huge change?

I am glad you asked! In short, Toastmasters International examined the sizes of the various districts worldwide and noticed that some had become considerably larger or smaller than others. To bring things into balance, the district boundaries were revised so districts would have a more even number of clubs and members. The aim was to ensure clubs still receive the support they need while also creating districts that are manageable for future leaders.

For District 47, this involved accepting several clubs coming from Southwest Florida. These clubs are now in Division H and have become an important element of our district community.

This change has also made District 47 larger, now comprising more than 170 clubs (compared to 151 last year) and over 3,500 members in South Florida, Southwest Florida, The Bahamas, and several online clubs.

Whenever a district expands, there is a period of adjustment. New relationships must be established, new leaders emerge, and all have to get used to working together. However, this is precisely what makes the change exciting: we now have the opportunity to connect with more members, share more ideas, and learn from clubs that offer different experiences and perspectives.

Above all, even though the boundaries have changed, the objective remains the same: we are still aiming to help people become more confident communicators and better leaders. The only difference is that a few more neighbors are now joining us on the journey.

VISION D47: TUNE IN

MOMENTUM, MILESTONES, AND MORE!

ENVISION

EMPOWER

EXEMPLIFY

Our year launched under the theme "Vision D47: Tune In: Envision, Empower, Exemplify." Across South Florida and the islands of The Bahamas, our members have turned those words into direct action. Before we tune in to Quarter 2, let's celebrate the powerful momentum and connection we built together this summer.

10 summer highlights that showcase the best of District 47

1. **A Strong Kickoff:** Envisioning our shared vision and sharing high energy across all 8 Divisions.
2. **Officer Training:** Empowering hundreds of officers to complete role-specific and General Sessions for club success during Summer Round 1 of training.
3. **Regional Collaboration:** Exemplifying connection and shared strategy between South Florida and The Bahamas. We had our Region Advisor, Lois Margolin, DTM, PDD, train our District Leaders.
4. **International Convention:** Representing District 47 globally and bringing home key insights for our clubs.
5. **Pathways Adoption:** A strong surge in early-year level completions and new member enrollments.
6. **Dynamic DEC Meetings:** Executive sessions focused on actionable strategies for exemplified leadership.
7. **Early Speech Success:** Celebrating our members who stepped up early to complete their icebreakers and initial pathways speeches. Extra shoutout to 17 members who have already earned a Triple Crown and 7 members who earned their Distinguished Toastmaster designations.
8. **Retention Focus:** Teams working behind the scenes to support club stability and renewal goals.
9. **Field Support:** Division and Area Directors conducting high-impact club visits and hands-on guidance.
10. **Unstoppable Synergy:** The shared strength, resilience, and connection that power our two-nation district.

Looking Ahead to Quarter 2

Quarter 2 is where strategy translates into long-term results. Over the next three months, our focus centers on delivering Quality Club Meetings, strengthening our membership, and upcoming Club Contests.

A special thank you to all the clubs that have already completed and submitted their Club Success Plan! Your proactive planning will pay off. A great Club Success Plan isn't just a deadline—it's a living roadmap designed to evolve with your members. As we tune in to October, continue updating your plan to empower your club all year!

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to your clubs and fellow members. Let's keep tuning in, empowering one another, and leading with excellence!

Signing off with Gratitude & Lots of Hugs!

District 47 Director, Susan Vineta, DTM



FIND YOUR FREQUENCY AT [TOASTMASTERSD47.ORG](https://toastmastersd47.org)



DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

DISTRICT DIRECTOR ADVISORY TEAM



TONY LONGLEY, DTM, PID
BAHAMAS ADVISOR



MATT KINSEY, DTM, PIP
DLC CHAIR AND
PARLIAMENTARIAN



MICHELLE LEWAY, DTM
CONFERENCE ADVISOR



JEANNIE CINTRON
WEBMASTER



RACHEL BRUNO
RECOGNITION CO-CHAIR



ERNESTO G. WILLIAMS, DTM
RECOGNITION CO-CHAIR



GARY MARTIN, DTM
YOUTH LEADERSHIP
FLORIDA CO-CHAIR



SHEWREA HEASTIE
YOUTH LEADERSHIP
BAHAMAS CO-CHAIR



SHAKIRA TAYLOR, DTM, PDD
CREDENTIALS CHAIR



ANCIN B. MUNNINGS, DTM, IPDD
REALIGNMENT CHAIR

Tuning In to Growth: Setting the Stage for Excellence Across District 47

As we lock into our shared frequency for the year, success doesn't happen by accident; it begins with a clear vision.

Heartfelt congratulations to every club that submitted its **Club Success Plan**! Your dedication to goal-setting and strategic planning lays the foundation for a vibrant, thriving year. Although the September 30th submission window for official DCP credit has closed, your Club Success Plan remains an essential living document for your leadership team. Mapping out your goals now ensures your members stay supported and on track all year long.

The energy is building as contest season approaches! Whether you plan to step up to the microphone or serve behind the scenes, excellence requires preparation.

We are also gearing up to celebrate our brightest stars at the **2026 Hall of Fame**! Join us as we honor outstanding achievements across our District:

- **The Bahamas:** Friday, October 30, at 7:00 p.m. | British Colonial Hotel, Nassau.
- **South Florida:** Friday, November 6, at 5:00 p.m. | Sheraton Suites, Plantation. Saturday, November 7, from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Sheraton Suites, Plantation, featuring high-impact educational workshops and DTM Speed Mentoring.

Finally, our **Program Quality Incentives** for the 2026–2027 program year are officially live on the District 47 website!

Download your tracking forms today, track your achievements, and prepare to be recognized.

Let's keep our signal strong, empower one another, and make this a year to remember!

Oris Martin, DTM
Program Quality Director, 2026-2027





DISTRICT 47

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PROGRAM QUALITY TEAM



ANDREA PRATT-SMITH
Conference Co-Chair



FLORENCE STEWART, DTM
Conference Co-Chair



BEVERLY CORDNER, DTM
Pathways Florida
Co-Chair



SHARI C. HALL
Pathways Florida
Co-Chair



CECE ESPEUT, DTM
DTM Florida Co-Chair



WENCE MARTIN, DTM
DTM Bahamas Co-Chair



KATHY DYKE, DTM
Speech Contest
Florida Co-Chair



ROSENA M. STUBBS, DTM
Speech Contest
Bahamas Co-Chair



ANGELIQUE GLINTON, DTM
TLI Bahamas
Co-Chair



KAY M. STAGRAY, DTM
TLI Florida
Co-Chair



CHARLENE HENDERSON
DTM TLI Florida
Co-Chair



JANE CABRERA, DTM
Data Analytics Chair

Greetings District 47,

From an amazing District Leader Training in Vancouver to expanding our District 47 family, your Club Growth Team has been on the move!

August Charters:

We are thrilled to welcome Voices of Choice (Division B, Area 20) and The Leadership Lounge at Baha Mar (Division F, Area 60) as the newest additions to our District Family, keeping our District Signal strong and clear!

Monthly Club Coach and Club Mentors Calls:

We keep club retention and club quality alive and well with our **Monthly Coach Calls**, led by Kate McClare, DTM, and Shelmerdine Cartwright, Jr., DTM, who facilitate active discussions and share best practices with our active and prospective coaches. Sessions are held the 2nd Friday of each month from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. EST. Join the discussion.

Monthly Club Mentor Calls begin on Friday, September 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., led by Member Engagement Chairs Michael Zucchi and Ernesto Gongora, DTM. Mentors for our newly chartered clubs will get tips on club quality and how to guide our brand-new members and clubs. Looking forward to hearing from our prospective and active members!

Smedley Membership Building Program:

It's officially October and the Smedley membership building campaign has ended. The competition was fierce among our clubs that have added 5 new, dual, or reinstated members since August 1, 2026.

Check out our District Smedley Leaderboard on our District Facebook groups on October 2nd to see which club and which division emerged victorious!

Speaking of October...yessss it's Toastmasters Month and Club Growth is starting the month off with a bang (on your mark, get set and go!) at CIBC Walk for the Cure on October 2nd 2026 in Nassau, Bahamas 🏃🏾‍♀️🚩

Stay TUNED IN

Linda Clarke, DTM

Club Growth Director, 2026-2027





DISTRICT 47

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CLUB GROWTH TEAM



MICHAEL ZUCCHI
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT
CO-CHAIR



ERNESTO GONGORA, DTM
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT
CO-CHAIR



ELMA P. KNOWLES, DTM
CLUB EXTENSION CO-CHAIR



JOHN SCHNEYER, DTM
CLUB EXTENSION CO-CHAIR



KATE McCLARE, DTM
CLUB RETENTION CO-CHAIR



**SHELMERDINE
CARTWRIGHT JR., DTM**
CLUB RETENTION CO-CHAIR



VICTORIA WHITE
CORPORATE CLUBS LIAISON

District Parliamentarian Matt Kinsey, DTM

Matt Kinsey, DTM, brings nearly two decades of Toastmasters experience to his role as District Parliamentarian for District 47. A Toastmaster since 2006, Matt has served the organization at virtually every level—from club and district leadership to the Toastmasters International Board of Directors and, ultimately, as International President during the 2022–2023 program year.

Throughout his Toastmasters journey, Matt has developed a deep appreciation for the principles of effective governance, thoughtful leadership, and fair, orderly decision-making. His experience serving in district leadership, on the International Board of Directors, and on the organization's Executive Committee has given him firsthand insight into how good governance helps leaders and organizations accomplish their missions.

As District Parliamentarian, Matt serves as an advisor to the District Director and District leadership team on matters of parliamentary procedure, governing documents, and the proper conduct of District business. His goal is not simply to interpret rules, but to help ensure that meetings and decisions are handled fairly, efficiently, and in a manner that gives every member an appropriate voice in the process.

Matt believes parliamentary procedure works best when it facilitates—not complicates—the work of an organization. Rules and procedures should create clarity, protect members' rights, and enable leaders to focus on what matters most: serving Toastmasters members and clubs.

He is honored to continue serving District 47 and looks forward to helping its leaders conduct the District's business with confidence, fairness, and integrity.



Eleasha Knowles, DTM — A Year of Growth, Connection & Purpose

I'm **Eleasha Knowles, DTM**, a woman who genuinely loves people, meaningful conversations, creativity, learning, and the beautiful process of becoming. I'm naturally curious, deeply passionate about personal growth, and I believe that when people feel connected, encouraged, and given room to grow, something powerful happens. Much of who I have become has been shaped by experiences that have taught me to **lead with heart, serve with intention, and never stop evolving.**

Toastmasters is one of the places where those values come alive for me. I love watching someone who once doubted themselves find their voice, seeing a quiet member discover their confidence, and witnessing a team come together to create something greater than anyone could accomplish alone. **That is the kind of Toastmasters experience I want to help cultivate.**

As I step into the new year as **Administration Manager for District 47**, my vision is to help create a District that is organized, connected, collaborative, and energized by purpose. I want the work happening behind the scenes to be as intentional as what happens on the stage: building systems that support our leaders, strengthen our clubs, encourage collaboration, and ultimately create better experiences for our members.

This year is especially meaningful because I'm also stepping into one of life's most exciting new chapters: **I'm getting married on October 31st!** As I prepare to become a wife while continuing to grow as a leader, professional, and woman, I'm reminded that life is truly about seasons, and this one is filled with **love, growth, service, connection, and new beginnings.** I'm excited for a year of **bold ideas, meaningful relationships, joyful memories, courageous leadership, and becoming....together.**



My name is Blaze Daktari Goldsmith, DTM.

As your District Logistics Manager, I take the logic out and add the magic!

Now that I have your attention, my role is to support our Madam District 47 Director, our Trio, and our District leaders with dynamic introductions, smooth transitions, tangible assistance, and yes, love. I have two decades in fitness and four decades in entertainment.

So yes, you may be encouraged to dance.

(Some of you may remember my virtual fitness classes in 2020).

You may be encouraged to sweat a little, as good things come to those who perspire with a smile. You may be encouraged to edify your vocal variety.

(Yes, I actually have people roar during my Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) presentations).

Overall, you will be encouraged to be yourself without limitations.

If I'm not on-stage roaring, then I'm ensuring our Toastmasters leaders have optimal support so they can deliver their inner lion in communication, leadership, service, and excellence for our district. This year, our frequencies are tuned high.

We will **Envision** instead of Worry.
We will **Empower** instead of Blame.
We will **Exemplify** instead of Complain.

I'm honored to serve you in District 47, energetically and logistically.



As The Sunshiner heralds one more year for District 47, I bring my contribution as the PRM for the 2026-2027 year.

My name is Giovanna Lester, I am based in South Miami, FL. My clubs are Bold Communicators and West Kendall, where I served as VPPR for three terms, and VPE and VPM.

From where I stand, this is a scary adventure. It is a “Create Your Own Adventure” type of role. The thing is that my adventure will impact each of you and our District, I do have guardrails to prevent me from going too far in one direction or another.

These guardrails are important. One of them is the Toastmasters Brand Manual- you can download it right here. For those who consider it too restrictive, I say, look at yourself in the mirror. What is it people see first when they look at you? Your smile? Your eyes? Your voice? Your hair? Your posture? Your necktie? That’s your trademark.

We want to communicate our message confidently and ensure those we reach understand that it is from Toastmasters International. There are images available to us, but there are image guidelines. They should reflect the Toastmasters environment. Where people look engaged, empowered, and supported, as portrayed in meetings, presentations, speeches, networking venues, conferences, training venues, and speech contests. You can use the pictures in the manual (page 23) or pictures that fit the guidelines. Your choice. There are also fonts and colors, and how to use them.

My desire is to help us communicate in clarity, and ensure that District 47 can Exemplify, Empower, and Envision our future, with your contribution.

Giovanna Lester
Public Relations Manager 2026-2027





DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

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GRAPHICS DESIGNER



PENDING
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DISTRICT
PHOTOGRAPHER



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CONFERENCE



BRANDON KINSEY, DTM
AUDIO/VISUAL
CONFERENCE

REGION ADVISOR QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS (QNTA)

Editor's Note: *Questions that Need Answers* is a new feature of *The Sunshiner*, where we hope to demystify the words, processes, and procedures in Toastmasters. Real people are behind the acronyms. Today, you will meet one of those people and learn what he or she does. Introducing Distinguished Toastmaster Lois Margolin, Region 7 Advisor and Past District 47 Director.



In layman's terms, what does a Region Advisor do, and how does it relate to Toastmasters International and District 47?

The Region Advisor serves as a liaison between Toastmasters International, the region's districts, and the International Board. My role is to support district leaders, ensure alignment with Toastmasters International's goals, and provide guidance based on my experience as a past District Director. For District 47, I help bridge communication and share best practices between the district and the international organization.

What is the time commitment for this role? Do you work alone, or do you have a team? Who are the people on your team?

The time commitment varies throughout the year, but on average. From April through August, I spent about 10 hours a week preparing for District Leadership Training. Now I spend 4 to 5 hours a week staying in touch with district leaders, attending regional meetings, and preparing for international events. I have a small support team including other region officers, International Directors, the Toastmasters Executive Board, and Toastmasters International staff, who collaborate on projects and share resources.

What are you looking for in a potential district leader?

Passion for the Toastmasters mission, strong communication skills, willingness to collaborate, and a desire to help others grow. Experience helps, but enthusiasm and a growth mindset matter most.

What is one area of Toastmasters that members have a hard time grasping, especially among veteran members?

The distinction between club roles and district roles can be confusing. Sometimes, seasoned members aren't sure when to step up to district leadership or how district initiatives affect clubs. Ask questions!

REGION ADVISOR QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS (QNTA)



Leadership begins at the club level. What advice do you give Toastmasters who want to be a leader but don't know where to begin?

Start by volunteering at your club, then look for opportunities to serve at the area or division level. Don't be afraid to ask current leaders for advice or mentorship - most are happy to help new leaders get started!

Are there any other ideas or wise words that you'd like to share that The Sunshiner didn't ask?

Toastmasters is what you make of it. The more you put in, the more you - and your fellow members - get out. Leadership is a journey, not a destination. Every role offers a chance to learn and make a difference. Don't be afraid to raise your hand; you never know where it will take you.



2026 Convention Vancouver, Canada



2026 Convention Vancouver, Canada



2026 Convention Vancouver, Canada





DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
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Division A



BERINA DARBOUZE
DIVISION A DIRECTOR



MARILENA DE MATTEIS
AREA 10 DIRECTOR



LUIS MENDOZA
AREA 11 DIRECTOR



GARFIELD WEBBE
AREA 12 DIRECTOR



NICOLA DANIEL-SYMONETTE
AREA 13 DIRECTOR



SAVANNAH GARDNER
AREA 14 DIRECTOR



DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
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Division B



YVETTE BARR, DTM
DIVISION B DIRECTOR



WANDA CALIMAN
AREA 20 DIRECTOR



EDDIE TOOTE III
AREA 21 DIRECTOR



CAREM COSTA
AREA 22 DIRECTOR



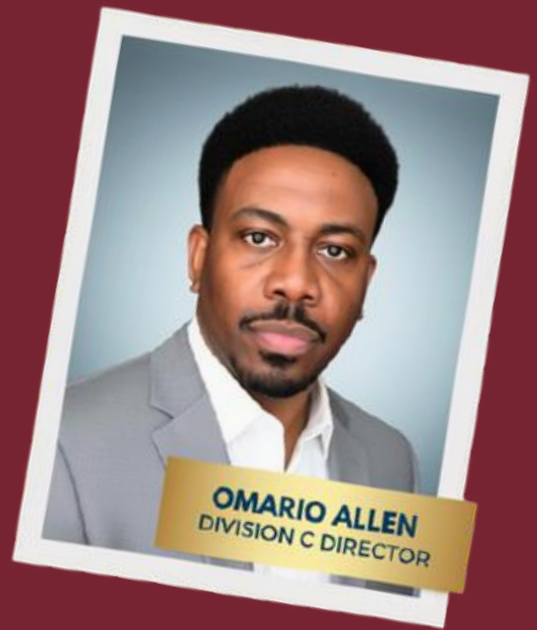
LONDELL ALBURY
AREA 23 DIRECTOR



DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

Division C



ALLISON TURNER
AREA 30 DIRECTOR



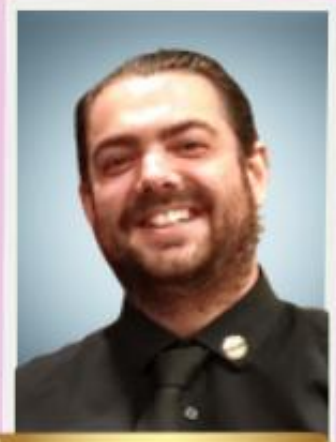
EPHRAIM CABRALE
AREA 31 DIRECTOR



GARY MARTIN, DTM
AREA 32 DIRECTOR



SHAH SAINT - CYR
AREA 33 DIRECTOR



DAVID DIMINO
AREA 34 DIRECTOR



DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
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Division D





DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
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Division E



GEO GORDON
AREA 50 DIRECTOR



CARLOS ALVAREZ
AREA 51 DIRECTOR



JOHN LAZAR, DTM
AREA 52 DIRECTOR



RAMON GALIANA
AREA 53 DIRECTOR



ALVARO RODRIGUEZ ALVAREZ
AREA 54 DIRECTOR



DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
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Division F



SONIA WHITE-WOODSIDE
AREA 60 DIRECTOR



ROSLYN MILLER
AREA 61 DIRECTOR



KENDELYNN PENNERMAN
AREA 62 DIRECTOR



KHALYLE EDWARDS
AREA 63 DIRECTOR



DISTRICT 47

SOUTH FLORIDA AND
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Division G



BERNDERA HEPBURN
DIVISION G DIRECTOR



MELTHEO WELLS
AREA 70 DIRECTOR



EVERKELL LAGUERRE
AREA 71 DIRECTOR



ALFREDA GIBSON
AREA 72 DIRECTOR



JAMAAL COOPER
AREA 73 DIRECTOR



DISTRICT 47

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Division H



GALE WEST, DTM
DIVISION H DIRECTOR



CHERIE HASLUP, DTM
AREA 80 DIRECTOR



CHARLENE HENDERSON
AREA 81 DIRECTOR



MAY GHALI, DTM
AREA 82 DIRECTOR



CYNTHIA PETERSON
AREA 83 DIRECTOR



DEBBIE WILDRICK
AREA 84 DIRECTOR



DIVISION ***DISPATCHES***



District 47: Purpose in Motion, Leadership in ACTION!

By Dr. Nekeisha Bascombe

August 8, 2026, represented a significant occasion for Toastmasters International, District 47, with the first Hybrid District Executive Committee (DEC) meeting of the 2026-2027 toastmasters year.

This DEC meeting attributed to the ongoing depiction of leadership and service within District 47 and provided a fitting reflection of this year's District theme - Envision, Empower, Exemplify - and the principles that would help guide District 47 forward!

Envision is looking ahead with purpose and recognizing the possibilities for stronger clubs, engaged members, and continued professional and personal growth. With the 2026-2027 toastmasters year underway, this DEC meeting allowed leaders to not only look within, but outwardly on how they could continue to make District 47 grow across Divisions, Areas and Clubs.

Conducting the installation of District 47's Trio and Division Directors, who undertook the leadership responsibility to Empower Area and Club leaders through support, collaboration, encouragement, and having a shared commitment to member success was a momentous occasion that added to the meeting.

At every level of Toastmasters, leadership training provides a great opportunity to model communication, accountability, mentorship, and commitment that would help clubs and members thrive - everything this meeting encapsulated. Moreover, Exemplifying leadership through service.

This first Hybrid DEC meeting represented more than just another task to check off on a calendar, but moreso, a continuation of something bigger than the District -- it represented ways in which to strengthen clubs, encourage teamwork, develop leaders, celebrate achievements and continue to advance the Toastmasters mission.

The challenge to District 47 is definitely clear:

Envision what is possible for your
Division/Area/Club.

Empower each other to succeed.

Exemplify excellence in everything you do
professionally and personally.

Here's to the District 47 DEC Team!! -
Moving forward with

**PURPOSE, LEADERSHIP,
CONNECTION and EXCELLENCE!**



Empowering Future Leaders Through Toastmasters

by Betty Ortiz-Valdes, DTM, Division E Director

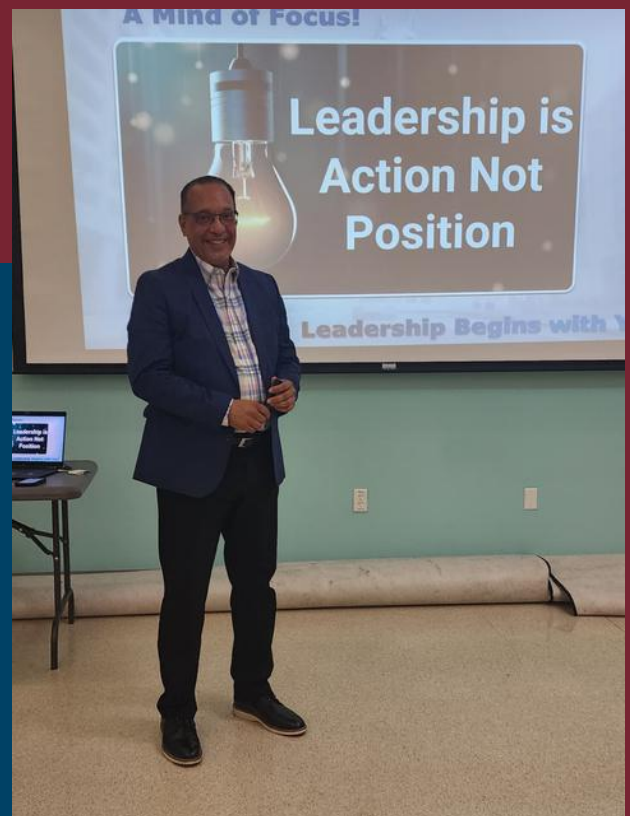
Are you interested in making an impact on the community by preparing teens to be future leaders? The Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program (YLP) offers opportunities to raise community awareness of Toastmasters, build a base of future leaders, recruit potential Toastmasters members, and provide community service that develops effective communication and leadership skills.

The program is an eight-session workshop designed for teens ages 14 to 18. A local Toastmasters club sponsors or coordinates the program. Aspiring Distinguished Toastmasters (DTM) candidates or current DTMs may facilitate it. This summer, the Landing Toastmasters Club hosted a Youth Leadership Program for teens in the community. Distinguished Toastmaster Evelyn Benson, who has over 30 years of experience as a Toastmaster, coordinated with the Miami-Dade Library System to integrate the Youth Leadership Program for local teens.

Since July 8th, high school students participating in the program have been learning and practicing the principles of effective listening, thinking, and speaking. Sessions were held at the Kendale Lakes Branch Library, located at 15205 S.W. 88th Street, Miami, Florida 33196. They delivered short impromptu speeches (1 to 2 minutes) and prepared speeches (3 to 5 minutes). Students also gave and received evaluations with constructive suggestions for improvement and explored basic parliamentary procedures, chairing meetings, preparing agendas and minutes, conducting elections, and developing classroom or group leadership skills within a fun, supportive environment.

For more information, contact the branch at (305) 388-0326 or email jacobsonf@mdpls.org. The program is open to teens ages 14 to 18. Interested participants can register at <https://mdpls.org/event>.

Are you ready to make an impact on your community?



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Workbook



**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**

From Returning Member to Area Director

Londell Albury's Toastmasters journey began in 2003, more than 20 years ago, when he joined the Freeport Eagles Club in Grand Bahama after a friend spoke highly of Toastmasters. Before joining, he had visited Club 1600 in Nassau.

Toastmaster Albury served his club as Vice President Membership and Vice President Education before stepping away in 2010. Albury felt the natural next step was to serve as club president, but he admits he "did not feel ready to fill those giant shoes at the time." Looking back now, he sees that hesitation as the kind of challenge Toastmasters prepares members to face.

Albury says his return "happened almost by accident," but it sounds more like serendipity. At a YMCA fair, he walked past a Toastmasters booth and stopped to learn more. After speaking with Bianca and Beverly from the Weston Area Toastmasters Club, he discovered there was a club seven minutes from his home. Having set himself a goal to improve his communication skills, he saw this as "the right message at the right time."



Professionally, Albury serves as a Senior IT Director in the healthcare education sector. He shares how Toastmasters has strengthened his ability to explain technical topics, present to senior leaders, and lead teams across locations. He emphasizes how Table Topics helped him think on his feet, and evaluations helped improve both his speaking and listening skills.

Now serving as Area 23 Director for Division B, Albury's commitment has been visible beyond his officer titles. While recovering from a foot injury, he continued rolling into meetings in his knee scooter, ready to participate, support members, and take on extra roles when needed.

His advice to anyone thinking about joining or returning is simple: "Don't wait until you feel ready. I've never met anyone who felt ready."

By: Honiara Barrios
VP Public Relations for Weston Area Toastmasters Club

DIVISION C - AREA 31 - SENSOR TOAST CLUB #3518

COCO FOR COCONUTS!



Why did the coconut stay positive? Because it always looked on the bright side of the shell." Members and the guests brought this meeting theme to life with their attire, virtual backgrounds, food, fun, puns, and the perfect WOD - liming!

Sensor Toast Club kicked off by celebrating World Coconut Day (September 2), liming,' and sharing favorite island memories! During the meeting, we learned how this fruit is as versatile as a Toastmaster! 'Liming didn't deter us from the mission – our agenda was packed and ready for hybrid action!

Everyone stayed 'palm' and didn't 'crack' under the pressure. We had two speakers and evaluators, a 'no shell-stressed' Table Topics, comments from our guests and dignitaries - Area 31 Director, Ephraim Cabrale, and District 47 Program Quality Director (PQD) Oris Martin, DTM – and then we celebrated our members' education accomplishments!

Those attending LIVE 'in studio' were able to enjoy the delicious hospitality - coconut shrimp, Hawaiian chicken and pizza, fresh fruit and macaroons with iced tea and coconut water. Always stay curious and keep your thoughts 'palm-azing'

Kay M. Stagray, DTM
Club President for Sensor Toast Club



"Good Vibes"
Judy Joffe, DTM and
Beverly Cordner, DTM
Club Vice President Education



Table Topics Speaker
"Paradise Found, Coconuts Included!"
Oris Martin, DTM and
District 47 Program Quality Director



Speakers –
Karen Golinger and
Richard O-Godson

Coral Gables Toastmasters Gives Back

Learning Beyond the Classroom

By Ginette Romero, Club President, Coral Gables Toastmasters

As the new school year begins, Coral Gables Toastmasters is proud to turn gratitude into service through a special Back-to-School donation initiative benefiting children receiving care at Nicklaus Children's Hospital.

Our club has the privilege of holding our Toastmasters meetings in the hospital's auditorium. In appreciation for the space and hospitality extended to us, our members wanted to find a meaningful way to give back to the community that welcomes us.

Recognizing that some children may begin the school year from a hospital room rather than a traditional classroom, Coral Gables Toastmasters will collect and donate approved school supplies and educational materials to support young patients during their hospital stay.

This initiative represents more than a donation. Toastmasters teaches us the importance of communication, confidence, leadership, and using our voices to make a difference. As a club, we believe those values should extend beyond our meeting room and into the community we serve.

Through this project, Coral Gables Toastmasters hopes to bring encouragement, creativity, and a little back-to-school excitement to children and families navigating a challenging time.

We are grateful to Nicklaus Children's Hospital for providing our club with a place to learn, lead, and grow. This is our opportunity to say thank you by giving back.

Coral Gables Toastmasters: Finding our voices, developing leaders, and serving our community.

Picture: l-r: Ginette Romero, President; Mayra Di Marzo, Beth Espinoza, Treasurer; Adriana Alavarez, Secretary; Alvaro Rodriguez Alvarez, Sergeant at Arms; Catherine Rojas, VP Public Relations; Patrick Tokarski





Lynda Osorio

Language: The Bridge to Purpose

by Carlos Alvarez, Area 51 Director

Language is not a barrier; instead, it is a bridge to reclaiming one's purpose and transforming lives. This concept is exemplified through the journey of Toastmaster Lynda Osorio, whose story demonstrates language's power in personal and professional growth.

Lynda Osorio, Vice President Education for Doral Toastmasters, faced a significant challenge after relocating to the United States. The obstacle she encountered was the language itself. Her English lacked fluency and confidence, preventing her from pursuing her passion for teaching personal branding—a role she had dedicated herself to in Colombia. While her skills remained, her ability to express them professionally was temporarily halted.

Joining Doral Toastmasters marked a turning point for Lynda. Through active participation, her English proficiency and public speaking skills improved. She developed stronger stage presence and became proficient at engaging audiences. Toastmasters improved her confidence and communication skills.

Lynda's dedication soon paid off. She reached a significant milestone by organizing and hosting her first official event entirely in English. The event was a success, filling the room and attracting distinguished guests, including a Coral Gables Commissioner and other community leaders. This accomplishment was a proud moment for both Toastmaster Lynda and the club.

Lynda's growth has been so impactful that she now serves as a mentor, guiding other Toastmasters members through their journeys. Her experience proved that language is not a barrier, but a bridge to reclaiming purpose and transforming lives. **37**

Celebrating 35 Years of Growth, Friendship, and Fun at West Kendall Toastmasters!

by Nathalie Moya, Club President, West Kendall Toastmasters

Time flies when you are having fun and building better speakers! Originally chartered on August 1, 1991, West Kendall Toastmasters recently gathered on August 12 to celebrate a remarkable milestone: our 35th anniversary. True to our guiding motto, "If It Is Not Fun, It Is Not Toastmasters"; the evening was an unforgettable celebration filled with laughter, nostalgia, and community spirit.

The room glowed with Toastmasters brand colors, festive balloons, coordinated table covers, and sweet cupcakes waiting for every guest at each table. A true centerpiece of the evening was our handmade vintage lectern, from the very first years of the club.

We took a wonderful trip down memory lane, honoring our roots and hearing incredible stories from longtime members of over 20 years Kathy Dyke, DTM, Kimberley Green, DTM, and Arnie Schwartz. They shared touching reflections on their journeys, the evolution of the club, and the lifelong friendships forged along the way.

Keeping the energy high and interactive, we introduced a lively Charades game segment for the first time. Members and guests alike acted out words and phrases, proving that mastering powerful body language can be an absolute blast.

At West Kendall Toastmasters, we pride ourselves on being an exceptionally friendly and welcoming group. Whether you are stepping into a meeting for the first time or working toward advanced communication goals, you will find a warm, supportive family ready to cheer you on every step of the way.

Here's to celebrating past achievements and looking forward to many more years of growing together!



Nathalie Moya, Club President



Left to Right: Kathy Dyke, DTM, Arnold Schwartz, and Kimberley Green, DTM

Healing Communicators Toastmasters Club 7178

Installation of Officers 2026-2027

Under the Theme: Excellence Exemplified
Author: Kendrik Minns, Healing Communicators VPPR
Edited by: Anthony Longley, DTM, PID

Healing Communicators Toastmasters Club 7178 proudly hosted its Club Officers Installation for the 2026–2027 Toastmasters Year on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, at the J. Whitney Pinder Building on Collins Avenue. The ceremony followed the inspiring theme “Excellence Exemplified.”

The evening was marked by the presence of distinguished Toastmasters dignitaries, including Past District 47 Director Ancin Munnings, DTM; Division F Director Charmaine Hanna, DTM; and Area 61 Director Toastmaster Roslyn Miller. Their attendance underscored the occasion’s significance and the club’s continued commitment to leadership and excellence.

The evening’s keynote address was delivered by Member of Parliament for Killarney, Honorable Michela Barnett-LEllis. Reflecting on her early years as a new attorney, she recounted the intensity of standing before the court for the first time: “My heart pounded so fiercely I was convinced the entire room could hear it. Of course, they could not—the judge could not, the other attorneys could not. But I could. And in that moment, I learned a lesson I have never forgotten courage is not the absence of fear—it is the decision that what you have to say matters more than the fear you feel.”

She went on to challenge the newly installed executive, reminding them that leadership and excellence are not dramatic acts, but ordinary discipline practiced consistently, showing up, being prepared, returning phone calls, reading one more chapter, and rehearsing one more speech. Her address concluded with a charge to the officers and members alike: “May your excellence be evident, and may your example inspire excellence in everyone who follows.”

Linda Clarke, DTM, the newly installed president, shared her journey from joining the program in December 2020 to the present. She described a reluctant start—initially declining to join the organization—before being persuaded to accept her first officer role as Sergeant at Arms. From that point, opportunities opened up for her. She emphasized her mentor’s guiding principle: “When you put in 80% effort in this program, you will reap 100% of the rewards and benefits.” She summarized the program as a place to grow from one level to the next, then to become the mentor for those who follow, thereby upholding and enshrining a culture of excellence.

In addition to leadership development and public speaking, Toastmasters International provides eleven unique education platforms, designed to support members in their personal and professional goals. To learn more about becoming a member of Healing Communicators Toastmasters Club 7178, visit our website at www.7178.toastmastersclubs.org.

Our social media platforms: Healing Communicators
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/healingcommunicators7178>
Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/healingcommunicators>
YouTube @healingcommunicatorsclub7178)

Club 7178 meets every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at the Cancer Society of the Bahamas, East Terrace, Centerville, and via Zoom (402 732 85)

Healing Communicators Toastmasters Club 7178 Installation of Officers 2026-2027



First Bahamas Branch - Supporting Youth, Building Futures

Written by: John C Fowler, Vice President Public Relations

First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters Club 1600



*John C. Fowler,
Vice President Public Relations
First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters Club 1600*

From its founding in 1969, First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters Club 1600 has demonstrated that leadership extends beyond its weekly meetings. Following the untimely death of Toastmaster Neil Percentie in 2011, the organization stepped in to help fill the void his passing left in the Union Village community. In 2012, the club staged the Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program there to mentor young people in the neighborhood. It has since grown into an annual tribute to Percentie under the banner of the “Neil Percentie Back to School Jamboree.” Alongside the YLP training, club officers and members distribute essential school supplies to children during the festive event, with support from partners including the Rotaract Club. The Jamboree has become one of the club’s most enduring community initiatives.



Beyond school supplies, the Jamboree provides food, entertainment, haircuts, hair braiding and other concessions donated by partnering vendors. Its impact, however, extends beyond material support. Through the “Knowledge Pavilion,” Toastmasters speak directly to children on topics such as the power of your voice, the power of music and self-confidence. Children are encouraged to believe that what they need to succeed already exists within them. The goal is not only to prepare them for school, but also to strengthen their confidence, mindset and sense of possibility.



First Bahamas Branch - Supporting Youth, Building Futures

continued

Over the years, the initiative has continued to adapt to the needs of the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Club 1600 supported remote learning by helping to address the digital divide and later hosted the Jamboree in a drive-through format. In 2022, 150 bags of educational supplies were distributed, while nearly 200 community members received food and other resources provided by corporate sponsors. In 2026, the Jamboree continued that legacy of giving, distributing 200 student packages and 50 teacher packages to help prepare both students and educators for the new school year. Reflecting on the event, Club President Azano Major said, “The Jamboree reminds us that leadership is most meaningful when it creates opportunity for the next generation to grow.”

Fourteen years later, the Jamboree remains a living tribute to Neil Percentie and a reflection of servant leadership in action by our members. It brings together giving and education, reminding us that preparing a child for school means more than filling a backpack; it also means helping that child believe in what is possible. That is precisely the purpose of the Youth Leadership Program. First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters Club 1600 remains deeply grateful to the sponsors and donors who continue to support this legacy and help us extend the benefits of Toastmasters into the community.



(Left to Right): Tyler Collie, Kevin Edgecombe, Crispin Gibson, Adam Johnson, Eddie Toote III, Camron Reckley (Past President), Jamaal Cooper (IPP), Daniel Douglas (VPE), Azano Major (President), Anthony Bodie Jr. (VPM), Amar Pearson (SAA), Xsandensio Farrow, Deangelo Johnson, Dominic Strachan, Dwight Grant Jr., Thurman L. Johnson II, Nigel Hepburn

A Special Recognition From...



HIGH VOLTAGE VOICES NEWSLETTER

In September the members of High Voltage Voices celebrated the legacy of one of the founding members. Her efforts "continues to shape [their] club today."

Honoring Soria Talbot

During our September 3 meeting, High Voltage Voices had the privilege of welcoming Barbara Strasdas, Area 41 Director, and her husband, George Strasdas, as we celebrated the legacy of Soria Talbot, one of the founding members of High Voltage Voices Toastmasters. We were also honored to have Marilyn Bieber, Division D Director, along with several distinguished Toastmasters leaders and guests from District 47 join us for this special occasion.

In 2009, when Barbara approached Soria about starting a corporate Toastmasters club at Florida Power and Light, Soria quickly helped bring together the people, support, and resources needed to charter what would become High Voltage Voices. Barbara remembered Soria as a shining light whose influence extended far beyond Toastmasters. As an Auditing Manager in Accounting, Soria was respected for her leadership, professionalism, and commitment to excellence. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she was known for her strong faith, passion for helping others grow, and dedication to building meaningful connections throughout the workplace.

Barbara fondly recalled Soria's welcoming smile, distinctive South African accent, and memorable speeches that brought both laughter and inspiration to fellow members. Many also remember her for organizing a workplace Bible study group and for the encouragement she offered those around her. "Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people." — Peter Strople, shared by Barbara Strasdas

A commemorative plaque was presented to High Voltage Voices in recognition of Soria's lasting contributions and the foundation she helped create. What made the tribute especially meaningful was the tremendous turnout from our members and guests. We had a packed room, outstanding participation throughout the meeting, and were honored to welcome district leaders and fellow Toastmasters who joined us in celebrating Soria's legacy and the impact High Voltage Voices continues to have after 17 years.

Although Soria Talbot passed away in December 2025, her influence lives on through the culture of encouragement, leadership, and growth that remains at the heart of High Voltage Voices Toastmasters today.



A Club Without Borders: Excellence, Achievement, and Growth

*By: Laure Paul
VP Public Relations - Davie Toastmasters*

What happens when Toastmasters brings together members from across the country with a shared commitment to growth, leadership, and communication? You get a club that keeps shining.

This year, Toastmasters of BankUnited is celebrating another remarkable season of achievement. Members participate from all over the country. The club's diverse community demonstrates that meaningful connections and professional growth can happen regardless of where you call home.

Their commitment to excellence is reflected in a remarkable milestone: the club has achieved President's Distinguished Club status for more than five consecutive years. This year, members added another accomplishment to that legacy by earning the Smedley Award, along with the Beat the Clock Award and the Tropic Trailblazers Award.

Perhaps the most inspiring accomplishments are those achieved by individual members. The club is proud to celebrate Toastmasters Jennifer Duffy and Maria Gargiulo, who each earned the prestigious Triple Crown Award. This honor recognizes members who complete three educational awards within a single Toastmasters year. Their achievement reflects a strong commitment to personal growth and inspires fellow members.

From members joining across the country to individuals reaching new heights in their Toastmasters journey, these accomplishments reflect what happens when a club creates an environment where people are encouraged to learn, lead, and grow.

These achievements are more than awards. They reflect members'; dedication, the strength of the club community, and the lasting impact Toastmasters continues to have on everyone it serves.



Voices of the Glades Bring Toastmasters Back to Belle Glade

By Marilyn Bieber, Division D Director

For years, Belle Glade had been without an active Toastmasters club. Now, a new generation of community leaders is bringing the spirit of Toastmasters back to the Glades.

Located along the southeastern shore of Lake Okeechobee, Belle Glade is surrounded by some of Florida's richest agricultural land. Yet the community continues to face challenges that can limit opportunities for professional and personal development. For William Freeman, a former Toastmaster and founder and executive director of People of Purpose, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to empowering returning citizens—individuals reentering society following incarceration—the idea of bringing Toastmasters back to Belle Glade was one he could not let go.

People of Purpose is built on the values of dignity, responsibility, community, and leadership—values that align naturally with Toastmasters' mission. It took time and patience, but through tenacity and perseverance, Voices of the Glades became a reality. Freeman joined forces with Holly Stewart, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and executive director of a multi-unit recovery organization serving individuals and families throughout Palm Beach County, to help move the vision forward.

"Seeing Voices of the Glades hold its first official meeting was powerful and inspiring," Freeman said. "It represented more than starting a club—it represented progress, opportunity, and community growth." Meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, Voices of the Glades officially became a Toastmasters club in June 2026.

Freeman passed the gavel to Toastmaster Marilyn Burns, a longtime Glades resident and community advocate, who will serve as the club's president for its initial term. Rounding out the leadership team are Toastmaster Valerie Jordan, secretary, and Toastmaster David Brinson, sergeant-at-arms. "Having a Toastmasters club in Belle Glade means creating opportunities for members of our community," Burns said. "We can develop future leaders, empower young people and adults, and ensure our community is prepared to speak confidently at tables where important decisions are made."

The smile on members' faces as they received their Charter Member Certificates at the first official meeting said it all. After years of an empty space, new voices are rising in the Glades—and they are ready to be heard.



The Full Circle

Have you ever found it challenging to fill all the meeting roles? Who wants to lead the meeting as Toastmaster of the Day? Give a speech? Be the evaluator? Members may leap at the chance to be the Table Topics Master to avoid answering an unexpected question.

Each meeting role allows members to improve communication and strengthen leadership skills. The Full Circle pin rewards members for participating in meeting roles.

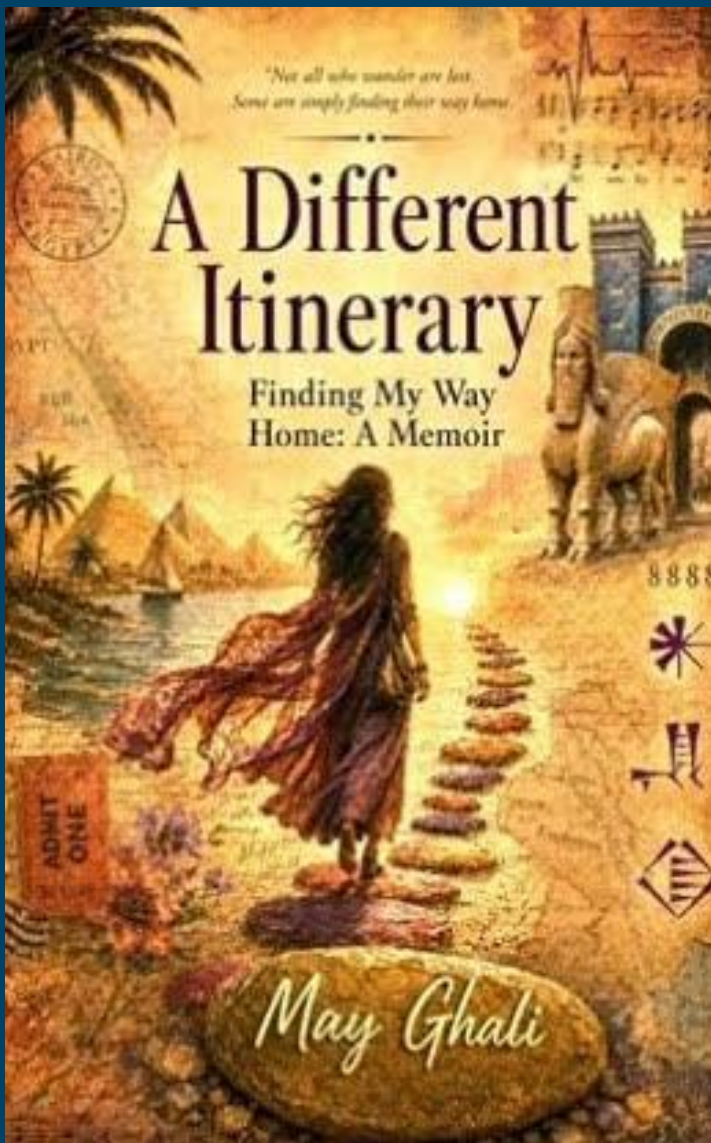
The Toastmaster ensures that members in attendance fill meeting roles. If members cannot fill the assigned role at the last minute, the Toastmaster finds another member to assume that role. The Toastmaster introduces most of the speaking roles and, in small clubs, may also serve as the General Evaluator.

The General Evaluator leads a group of evaluators: Speech Evaluators, an Ah-counter, and a Grammarian. The Speech Evaluator listens to a speech, prepares, and delivers feedback during the meeting. The Ah-Counter listens and reports on the type and number of unnecessary filler words to help speakers improve their presentations. The Grammarian presents a “word” at the beginning of the meeting to help members enhance their vocabulary skills, tracks members who use the word, and reports at the end of the meeting.

The Timer records and reports the length of time of primary speaking roles, i.e., speaker, Table Topics responses, and speech evaluation. (During a club meeting, the Timer report is for information; however, it is critical in determining winners of contests. The timing exercise prepares members to meet timeframes for professional presentations.)

In 2018, District 48 Director Emily Drenberg created a Full Circle pin as an incentive for Toastmasters to achieve personal success by filling the meeting roles that are now required as part of Pathways.

Gale West, DTM
Division H Director



May Ghali debut memoir. *A Different Itinerary* is a heartfelt memoir that traces one woman's remarkable journey through a life shaped by opportunity, resilience, and discovery.

Through stories of family, faith, immigration, education, travel, and personal growth, May invites readers into the experiences that have defined her life. From her roots in Iraq to her career as a pharmacist in the United States, she reflects on the people, places, and lessons that helped shape her perspective and purpose.

Filled with humor, wisdom, cultural insight, and unforgettable memories, this memoir explores the challenges of adapting to new worlds while honoring the traditions and values of the past. Along the way, readers will encounter stories of perseverance, friendship, curiosity, and the enduring power of human connection.

More than a collection of memories, *A Different Itinerary* is a celebration of life's unexpected turns and a reminder that some of our most meaningful destinations are found along the journeys we never planned.

Whether you enjoy memoirs, stories of immigration and cultural identity, or reflections on personal growth and lifelong learning, *A Different Itinerary* offers an inspiring and deeply personal account of a life well lived.



District 47: Celebrating Excellence

ACES HALL OF FAME: GOING ALL-IN ON EXCELLENCE

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- Double the Jackpot.

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