



## South Bay Toastmasters

# Club 280 Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2010

## President's Message by Cherry Bush

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**W**e made it through another year. The last two years have been filled with many economic challenges for most of us.

For me, Toastmasters and the members of Club 280 are always my light shining at the end of the tunnel. Where else can you go and have a great meal with great people willing to share their great stories and experiences? As President, I look forward to moving Club 280 into a new decade with new members who are stretching to follow their self-improvement objectives. With the great leadership of our Executive Committee, Club 280 will continue to be a Distinguished Club. Thanks to our VP of Education, Kevin Johnson, we have a great mentor program to make sure our members get the support and feedback

they need to become great speakers.

Speaking of self-improvement, our VP of Public Relations, Bonny Kamen, has challenged some of us at Club 280 to think outside the box with our new website. If you're not technology driven and fear becoming a friend on Facebook (OK! My secret is out), you will miss out on so many great things happening at Club 280. Check out our new and improved website to see our meeting location and schedule, information about our spring speech contest, and if you really want to get a good look at some of our members, check out the photo section. I don't want to brag, but there are a lot of happy faces!



I hope you are well on your way to following your 2010 resolution. If eating less, sleeping more or dusting off last

year's exercise equipment hasn't worked as planned, there is still plenty of time for you to follow your dream to become a great public speaker. Come join us every Wednesday at 7 PM at the Sizzler Restaurant. There is always an extra place setting at our table!

## Holiday Party by Bonny Kamen, DTM

The night was crisp just as a December night should feel. Outside, a holiday parade was passing by, with marching bands and Santa Claus. Inside a restaurant up on the hill, named Giorgio's, the heat was on. Our wonderful, joyful Holiday Party was planned and organized by our VP of Education, Kevin Johnson. All in attendance had a blast.

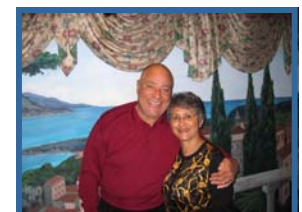
We had 5 delectable courses – it seemed as if the food brought to the table was never ending.

It was great to have the time to chat



with other members and their guests. A long-standing tradition at our Club's Holiday Party is the gift exchange. Somehow this is always the highlight of the evening, creating deep belly laughs and lots of strategic moves by the players.

Once again, a fabulous party celebrated by the most festive Toastmasters I know.



## Proud to be a Member by Yoshiko Sakiyama CC

One Wednesday evening, I was looking hesitantly into the meeting room at the Sizzler restaurant when a gentleman with an attractive smile approached and invited me to a seat. Soon the meeting started. During Table Topics session, members were given a question and made a short, impromptu speech one after another. The Table Topics Master kept shooting clever questions; members answered them with wit and humor. Surprisingly, I was also given a chance to stand up and say something. I felt I was welcomed to the club warmly. Thus, I'd already made up my mind to join it when I walked out of the Sizzler.

This is the beauty of our South Bay Toastmasters Club. Whoever visits the club feels so comfortable that

he/she will want to visit again. People are open-minded and supportive to new members; it's almost like a family. I can't forget the time I got stuck in the middle of my second speech. I regretted that I left my cheat sheet at my seat. Though I tried to collect myself to continue, I was at my wit's end. No word came out of my mouth for a while. Then, one member picked up my cheat sheet from the table and passed it to me. Thanks to him, I was able to finish my speech. I spent the rest of the meeting hating myself. When the meeting adjourned, some members kindly came over to encourage me. One said, "I enjoyed your demonstration of yoga breathing." The other said, "Don't worry, everyone experiences it. I blew my line when I ...." My evaluator gave me succinct

advice on what I should do when I blow my lines. I was so grateful for their sincerity. At the same time, I was impressed by their tactfulness and the discretion with which they rescued me from misery. I'm also fond of the casual atmosphere of South Bay Toastmasters Club meeting. Held at the Sizzler restaurant, the meeting is accompanied with a babble of voices and the clatter of tableware. This helps me to feel relaxed. I would feel more nervous at a rigid meeting in a quiet room. Members eat while listening to speeches. No worries about wardrobe, since there is no dress code to observe.

I've learned a lot by being the club secretary for the last two terms. I've participated in the officers' trainings, which were held outside the club. I got to listen to some powerful speeches by professional

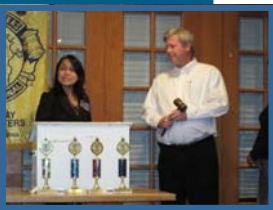
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### Achievements

**Competent Communicator:**  
Gary La Tourette

**Advanced Communicator Bronze:**  
Lodel Yerro



## Why Toastmasters is So Important by Kevin Johnson ATM/G CL

I joined South Bay Toastmasters Club 280 for selfish reasons. I wanted to become a better public speaker. I wanted to spontaneously respond to questions and appear intelligent. I wanted to communicate effectively with my family and business associates.

It was initially self-centered thinking. Every week I focused just on my personal growth.

That all changed when I became a mentor. Our mentor program holds a special place in my heart. I felt such gratification by helping a fellow Club member "break the ice" as a guest and then finish first in a division or area speech contest. I still enjoy being a coach.

I did not have a mentor in the early stages of my Toastmasters career, and I am pleased that we now assign each new member a veteran for guidance. I

struggled to break the bonds associated with reading my speech verbatim and never looking up. Eventually, through self-determination and a personal desire to improve, I was finally courageous enough to speak without notes. This method of speaking dramatically changed my life in countless ways.

I urged all of my mentees to speak without notes too. Tim Bohen brought up the idea of having key words written down and visible during a member's speech. The plan was to guide the speaker in case he/she suffered a mental lapse. Fortunately, it never happened to me because I was "vaccinated with a record player needle," but I heard

many horror stories that validated its necessity. That concept became a key part of my training.

I realize the struggles and fear that a new member feels. I felt them too. I found that weekly practice, Club support, constructive evaluations from fellow members and a personal trainer really made a difference in my performance.

All of the Toastmasters South Bay Club 280 members share a common goal. It is of the utmost importance that we continually strive to improve our public speaking skills. Let's do it together in a way that can be easily taught and passed on from year to year to our new members.

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Speakers. I was also able to get useful information while attending the secretary training. Within the club, through the monthly club officers' meeting, I came to have a better understanding how this club is being managed. Indeed, the hard work of the officers and honored members behind the scene makes this club so wonderful.

Another good aspect of our club is that it consists of people of all different walks of life: from a novice like me (English is my second language, I'm Japanese, and have arrived recently in the US) to an advanced speaker who's been a Toastmaster for decades. Some come to practice public speaking for their business and profession. Others come to meet their personal goals. Everyone will benefit from well-planned Toastmasters programs because Toastmasters is designed to build not only public speaking skills but also leadership skills. Each member can pursue his/her own goal at his/her own pace. Club 280 is sophisticated but warm; well-organized but flexible.

"I'm proud of being a member of this extraordinary club."



## So Important

 by Kevin Johnson

(Continued from page 2)

I will continue to be Chairman of the mentor Program, because I truly believe in this worthwhile program. I would be willing to help anyone with an interest in learning to speak from the heart with just a few words as guidance instead of reading from your script to the audience.

Please contact me if you would like to know more about the planned spontaneous speaking style that helped me improve or if you wish to become a leader by teaching others to succeed.

## The Memoir of My Brief Reign

 by Richard Casriel, ATM/B,CL

It was my great pleasure to have served as your Vice President of Membership. During my tenure, we were joined by many new and excellent Toastmasters. It was a thrill to see Pam Bazzelle cast her hypnotizing spell in her ice breaker. In her brief time with us, Kryssie Mackey has dazzled us with immense knowledge of oratory. The growth of Antonio Araiza's skills has been amazing. In a few short months, he's become a confident and compelling public speaker. Jeff Wolfe has hit the ground running; I suspect that he'll be a DTM within a few years. These Toastmasters have demonstrated to all of us the power and the beauty of our organization.

We, unfortunately, have had a few departures within the last year. Ying-Ming Lee

is the only man I know who literally has a magnificent speech for any occasion. We wish him well in Ridgecrest. Our Past President, Michelle Chang, is missed greatly as both a speaker and as a friend. I'm sure she's doing great things with her new club in Pasadena. One of our group, sadly, had all too short a stay with us: Lori Lim was a member for only a few weeks. She'll be remembered for her smile, her humor, her love of her family and for her desire to learn the ukulele. Her unexpected death, only a few days she delivered her Ice Breaker, left a great void to her family, her friends and her fellow Toastmasters.

My time of service to our club was made smooth by all the Toastmasters. A few will be named: Stuart Mosher, Bernie Steenson, Lodel Yerro, Kevin Johnson, and our illustri-

ous President, Cherry Bush. Bernie has returned to the post of VP Membership. Bernie, with the help of all the South Bay Toastmasters, will continue to grow this club for another sixty-five years!



# A World of Toastmaster Possibilities

by Lodel Yerro, AC-B/AL-B



**M**y boss in college asked me this question after I gave her a compliment about her public speaking skills. She continued to tell me that she used to be part of Toastmasters. Then she informed me about a club on campus (Dominguez Hills Speaks) that I could possibly join. I was always very impressed with how dynamic and confident she was in front of an audience – how she always knew what to say, how to say it, and how to engage her audience. After that conversation, Toastmasters was filed on the back burner of my mind. I just didn't have the time to fit it into my busy schedule working part-time and studying full-time. Honestly, I don't think I really tried to attend a meeting because I was already comfortable being in front of an audience because of my experience being part of a large church congregation. I thought, if that is what they are going to teach me, I already know it.

After I received my degree in 2001, I started work at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, my first "adult" job, and was promoted to an entry-level management position three years later. This position required me to assist my department director with the beginnings of a health resource center. It was really exciting for me to be part of something from its infancy. And, like any business that is starting out, marketing needs to be done. So, one day my boss asked me to make a presentation at a management training session in her stead. This meant presenting in front of newly hired management personnel composed of people holding positions ranging from entry level to vice president positions. I was pretty confident that I was going to breeze through the 15-minute presentation because my boss gave me a script to follow. So I thought. My nervousness got the best of me. I ended up pretty much reciting the script from memory like a robot and leaving out some important information. Not to mention, I fumbled through the Q & A portion like I was a newly hired employee! Afterwards, I told my boss what had happened, and guess what she said? She asked me, "Have you heard of Toastmasters?"

That was the kick that got me moving! This is a sign, I thought. Then, I proceeded to convince myself that I could no longer avoid Toastmasters. And if I were to make a good impression next time, if there was to be a next time, I really needed to listen to my boss! The plan was to be a member of a club for a few months, learn from other club members how to be a charismatic public speaker, and

move on with life.

I made that decision in June 2006.

Hello, it is now the beginning of 2010! What happened to the join-for-a-few-months-and-be-a-charismatic-speaker plan, you ask? Well, a lot of things.

The month after I joined, I was almost literally pushed to be a Table Topics contestant at our club's Fall speech contest. I was there to gain experience, so I agreed. Little did I know that I was going to win and move on to the Area level. However, I didn't place that day, as you would have expected. But I learned a lot from the other competitors that day. I learned that I need to practice my impromptu speaking skills some more (OK, A LOT more) and sadly realized that I have a long way to go to being that charismatic public speaker I aspire to be. That contest also piqued my interest in pursuing leadership roles after witnessing a smoothly run event.

It was a world of Toastmasters possibilities for me from then on. I decided right away that I was going to do the Communication and Leadership tracks simultaneously, and be open to opportunities inside and outside of the club.

For the communication track, I started with the basic Competent Communication manual, as all new Toastmasters do. After 6 speeches, I joined Stage 2, an advanced club, which gave me the opportunity to focus on manual speeches and to hear feedback from multiple experienced Toastmasters. That feedback served as stepping-stones for me to build on future speeches. Consequently, I entered club speech contests to "sharpen the saw" – Evaluation in Fall 2007, Tall Tales in Spring 2009, and International, also in the Spring of 2009. These contests allowed me to apply the public speaking skills I learned at the club level to be able to compete at the Area level – each time, "learning [from other Toastmasters] by doing," as the Toastmasters credo says.

However, as much as I liked feeling the excitement and the adrenaline that go with competition, I found myself being involved in the Leadership Track more. This goes back to the main reason I joined Toastmasters: to apply my newly learned skills to my work life and, ultimately, to my overall life. And, to impress my boss, of course! At the club level, I had the opportunity to take on the roles of VP of Membership (Jul-Dec '07), VP Education (Jul-Dec '08), Secretary (Jan-Jun '09 at another

club) and President

(Jan- Jun '09). Each role taught me different skills that I was able to apply in my professional life. For example, as VPM, I learned membership recruitment, retention, and promotion as well as marketing. Then as VPE, I learned schedule coordination and club performance monitoring. And as President, I learned to lead a club alongside an executive committee with the purpose of ensuring that each club member is well supported and has a dynamic Toastmasters experience while maintaining the club's President's Distinguished status.

Still in the back of my mind, the idea of being more involved at another level will teach me practical skills that will make me more marketable in my professional life. There is always more to learn, as they said. So I took on roles at Area and Division speech contests. I've been a Sergeant-at-Arms, an Assistant Timer, a Raffle Co-Chair, and even a Toastmaster. When the opportunities came, I also volunteered at District conferences as part of the Hospitality and Raffle Committees and as one of the Ballot Counters. During the 2007-08 term, I had the privilege to be a Public Relations Officer Liaison for Division D. And, currently, I'm enjoying the leadership skills I'm learning as an Area Governor. All of these roles require and teach preparation, organization, commitment, dedication as well as flexibility, adaptability and resourcefulness. They also taught me (and I'm still learning) to improve my listening, team-building, conflict resolution and time management skills.

Today, I can finally answer my former bosses and say, "Yes, I've heard of Toastmasters!" Not only have I heard of it, but I have experienced it for the past three and a half years as its public speaking and leadership student. And I still have a lot more to learn. I can't wait for the next session!

*Lodel Yerro is the current Area DI Governor*

## Spring 2010 South Bay Toastmasters Officers

**Cherry Bush, CC**  
President

**Kevin Johnson, ATS/CL**  
Vice President of Education

**Bernie Steenson, ATS/AL**  
Vice President of Membership

**Bonny Kamen, DTM**  
Vice President of Public Relations

**Angela Sayers, ACG/CL**  
Treasurer

**Yoshiko Sakiyama**  
Secretary

**Mark Redman**  
Sergeant-at-Arms



Left to Right - Lodel Yerro, Area Governor, Mark Redman, Angela Sayers, Yoshiko Sakiyama, Bonny Kamen, Bernie Steenson, Kevin Johnson, Cherry Bush

**South Bay Toastmasters  
Club #280**

**Meets on Wednesdays  
7:00—9:00 pm  
at  
Sizzler Restaurant  
2880 Sepulveda Blvd.  
Torrance, CA**

**Website:  
[southbaytoastmasters.org](http://southbaytoastmasters.org)**

## Public Relations is Everyone's Job by Bonny Kamen, DTM

New members are the life blood of our club. They provide new insights and bring an added level of energy. Just having guests sit in our meetings allows for bigger audiences and provides us with more feedback for our presentations. How do we attract new members? We – all of us – need to get the word out. Here are five tips and ideas how you can help promote the club:

1. Wear your Toastmasters pin to school, work and place of worship.
2. Display your Toastmasters Award Ribbons at work.
3. Let people know that you attend Toastmasters meetings on Wednesday nights.
4. If you get any compliments on your speaking, reply with how you are improving by attending Toastmasters meetings.
5. Hang our club flyer in places that your frequent.

By taking these steps you, can assist the Executive Board's efforts to attract new members to our club.

This newsletter is compiled and published by  
Bonny Kamen DTM, VP of Public Relations