



Southern Lights Toastmasters Club

THE ENLIGHTENER

June 2020



Southern Lights 2020

What a year! Like many others, we had to adapt to the new realities we faced, with on line meetings and different ways to connect. In true Southern Lights' fashion, the team rose to the occasion and made it a resounding success. It makes it a pleasure to be part of the professionalism and excitement generated by the club.

Toastmaster of the Year

Wayne Sager DTM

This award is presented to a member who has shown dedication, excellence, leadership, and mentorship at both the club level and beyond, to area and district. It is an outstanding achievement. This year's recipient accepted a demanding role on the executive and poured his heart into planning professional and engaging meetings. We appreciated his creative meeting themes such as, "Give Your Best," "Every Day is a Good Day," and in spring, "Sun Breaking Through." The artistic flair in the wording of themes provided opportunity for unique nuances to be

used by the Toastmaster and for Table Topics, which in turn, created interesting meetings. Furthermore, Wayne actually offered that any Toastmaster could develop his own theme so anyone could feel able to take on role of Toastmaster. I almost took him up on this in order to have a meeting themed

(continued on Page 5)



New President's Message

Diane Gunn CC ALB

Thank you for your support. I'm delighted to work with the members of Southern Lights Toastmasters Club to make our meetings fun, and full of learning and self growth.

I have been a member of Southern Lights for seven years, and those years have been years of learning, regrowth, recovery, and education. As a leader of an organization for 20 years, I knew there were still gaps in my speaking ability, and Southern Lights showed me that I had room to

(Continued on page 3)

Herb Ashley Award Spirit of Success Award

Nigel Bowles ACB ALB DL1

Those of you who have been part of Southern Lights for a duration will remember Herb Ashley, who was a member from 1981 until his passing in 2010. In 2011 the “Spirit of Success Award” was named after Herb Ashley, for his enduring legacy of excellence to quality meetings, mentorship, and attention to detail. This year’s recipient was a charter member and I think it is fitting that he chaired the Fortieth Anniversary celebration committee, for he is an integral part of our club’s success. Club success stems from individual’s success, and frequently we see Nigel coaching individuals, helping them ensure that their audiovisual will work, coaching after a meeting to help offer assistance with simply offering words of feedback.

His ingenuity and organizational talent benefitted individuals and the club as a whole through his collaboration with a team to design the Accomplished Leader Program. Nigel has a wonderful manner of getting to know people, making them feel significant, and zeroing in on where a person may need some extra encouragement. He is a mentor to all of us. He is enthusiastic and completes every task conscientiously. He is one of the first to arrive at meetings to ensure room set-up is smooth, and he even serves as a chauffeur when needed!

He participated in the Fall Humorous Speech Contest and also the Spring Table topics Contest. He can be counted on to take on roles regularly and to engage his audience in a variety of speeches, from educational to storytelling.



Although we had to postpone our Fortieth Anniversary Celebration, when we hold the event, we will all appreciate Nigel’s organization, commitment, and talent. He invested much personal energy and time into the anniversary plans, yet he was not hesitant to consider safety above his own personal desires. We can always count on Nigel to act with compassion and the good of the club. Just wait, and we will have that celebration Nigel!

As President, I always know I can count on Nigel for support. Congratulations to Nigel Bowles, recipient of the Herb Ashley Spirit of Success Award.

New Designations & Achievements

Wayne Sager DTM—Toastmaster of the Year Award

Nigel Bowles ACB ALB—**Herb Ashley Spirit of Success**

Rhonda Lagace CC CL— **The Extra Mile Award**

Diane Gunn CC ALB—**President’s Choice**

Lukasz Rozycki—**Rookie of the Year**

Karen Carleton CC CL —**Table Topics Contest**

Lukasz Rozycki—**Humorous Speech Contest—Lv 1**

Rhonda Lagace CC CL—**Humorous Speech Contest—Lv2**

Darryl Hauge ACS ALB—**International Speech Contest**

Juergen Abildt, Bob Wang—**Triple Crown**

ACS—Juergen Abildt

ACB—Michelle St Louis, Nigel Bowles

CC—Eden Li, Wayne Sager

ALB—Michelle St Louis, Wayne Sager, Juergen Abildt

CL—Bob Wang

EC2—Marlene Petruch

MS1—Rhonda Lagace, Bob Wang

MS2—Rhonda Lagace, Bob Wang

LD1—Lukasz Rozycki

TC1—Lesley Revell

TC2—Lesley Revell

grow in leadership, speaking, delegation and mentorship. Each SLT member has shown me that we are all part of a team that helps each of us grow how we want to, need to, and have to, in order to achieve success in life and our careers.

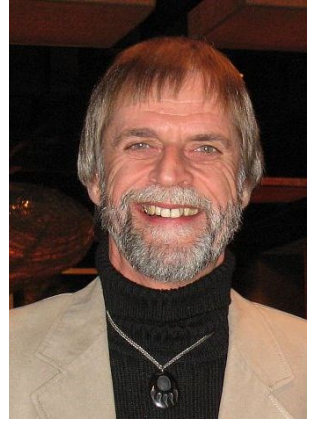


The theme for this year is teamwork. Toastmasters have worked globally through a pandemic, and experienced phenomenal growth and changes in our work and personal lives. Thanks to the historically strong leadership of all of our past presidents our club has grown, adjusted, and pivoted in these remarkable times. In reflection, I also admire the welcoming nature of all of our members in these times of racial unrest. Toastmasters International and SLT are places of welcome, regardless of race or disability, and that is the best part of membership. Founder Ralph Smedley said, "Ours is the only organization I know dedicated to the individual; we work together to bring out the best in each of us and then we apply these skills to help others." Let's follow that ideal for the next season in SLT. Diane Gunn, President, 2020/21



Returning Member Message - Juergen Abildt, ATM ACS

Toastmasters?? What is that?? Who are they?? The very first time I heard about Toastmasters was in 1985 when I attended a three-day seminar for self-improvement, “The Phoenix Seminar”, by Brian Tracy. The following week had not even passed and I was on the prowl. I don’t quite remember how I came across Southern Lights... and subsequently attended a few times as a guest. Not wanting to waste a lot of time sitting on the sidelines, I joined after about my third or fourth visit and a lot of in-depth conversations with Herb Ashley and many others.



What drew me in? I appreciated most the strength of the club, as well as the fact that we had five DTMs at that time. How much more depth can one want?!? I have never seen such a supportive atmosphere anywhere, with help and pointers offered how to navigate the multitude of opportunities within the club and the encouragement to take on bigger challenges and new roles.

With that in mind I decided to try out my thus far few learned skills in the role of Ed VP for 1987/88, and President for the following year. My first BIG surprise came when I was awarded Toastmaster of the year in 1988 – not at all expected! As if all that wasn’t enough, I also took on the duties as Area 9 Governor that same year, only to get involved more yet as Division F Governor after that! Yes, it was a steep learning curve, but, unbeknownst to me, it would prove to be most invaluable in more than a decade to follow in my long list of professional international activities.

There was rarely I contest that I did not participate in up to various levels of success, only to be inspired more, to reach higher yet. Training sessions, Toastmaster Talk, Variety Nights, many conferences and conventions; never was I able to give back as much as I have received, because that is what Toastmasters is. No matter how much you put into it, you never can catch up with the returns. The memories from all that time, the activities and service are among the fondest I have as I look forward to add more to this far from complete tapestry of experiences.



Going the Extra Mile Award— Rhonda Lagace CC CL

The Extra Mile Award is to recognize a member who invests commitment, plus some – the extra mile. This person furthers the excellence and professionalism of Southern Lights. This year’s winner tends to work quietly behind the scenes with a calm demeanor. She helps willingly and adds a wise perspective to decisions. She stepped up to be the club Treasurer this year and also served on the Fortieth Anniversary Planning Committee. I always enjoy **Rhonda’s** speeches; she either motivates her audience to thoughtfulness or to roars of laughter. Who could forget her funny tale of her *not so calm* response to the car salesman?! She was the winner of the Fall Humorous Speech Contest Level II, and also participated in the Spring International Speech Contest. I really admired Rhonda’s work ethic when she faced significant extra work with the postponement of the anniversary celebration. Without a word of complaint, she organized refunds, dealt with the bank, and drove extra miles to have cheques signed. Rhonda is a commendable toastmaster and fulfills her commitments with professionalism, credibility, skill, and a delightful warmth and humor. Thank-you, and congratulations to Rhonda Lagace as the winner of the “Going the Extra Mile Award.”



(Toastmaster of the Year Continued from page 1)

cats, but

In addition to meeting organization, this award winner stands as a mentor to all of us. He encourages individuals to take on new roles and to realize that our club is a safe place to take risks. We often see him talking privately with a new member, offering practical suggestions with his special touch of humor. Most of all, he always helps people learn to have fun while learning leadership and communication; he motivates people to dream of their potential. He is a master at evaluation, as we have seen with his repetitive winnings of evaluation contests in the past.

This person is eager to share his toastmaster expertise and can help anyone develop a speech from any life experience. He has shared wisdom of how to get speech ideas, how to organize speeches, how to remember them, and makes the delivery look easy. It is not easy, but he has been a toastmaster for twenty-eight continuous years. He joined Southern Lights in 1992.

Lastly, this person is an example to us of the benefits of becoming involved in Toastmasters beyond the club level. He has mentored clubs and has keen interest in the area and district. There were times this last year when he was the one who held the standard of excellence because he had the background of experience in Toastmasters that I do not have yet.

Congratulations and appreciation to Toastmaster of the Year, Distinguished Toastmaster **Wayne Sager**.



Evaluation: What's in it for me?

By: Karen Carleton, CC, CL

Toastmaster's has long emphasized performing evaluations, but why? We learn and grow from feedback, whether it's from a parent, an instructor, a community leader, or a supervisor. While evaluation is subjective to some extent, we strive to bring objectivity to evaluation by judging based on criteria communicated in advance to the *evaluee*. In addition, how and when feedback is

delivered also affects how well comments and suggestions are integrated (learned) by individuals. Effective supervisors and teachers know that offering some form of *'feedback sandwich'* (i.e. positive, constructive, positive) can make it more digestible to the recipient and supports his/her development. Ideally, feedback should be delivered *soon after* the performance so that it's closely linked to the behavior and therefore meaningful to the performer.

Toastmasters meetings involve speech evaluators, and a general



evaluator. These roles enable providing feedback to the speaker or the club, based on an evaluation framework or examining specific

(Continued on page 8)

THANK YOU TO OUR HOSTS

for our Christmas Party (Pat and Randy) and our Annual Barbeque at Darryl and Rita's Farm.





President's Choice Award—Diane Gunn CC ALB

The President's Choice Award was instituted by Rhonda Lagace in her term as President in 2016/17. It is a privilege to reflect and select a recipient with special qualities who deserves recognition, has been instrumental to the club, and for whom the President has come to treasure.



I have chosen **Diane Gunn** as the winner of this award. My esteem of Diane includes not only this year but looks back to when I first joined Toastmasters. She was one of the first people to impress me with her smile, warmth, kindness, and sense of humour. I loved listening to her storytelling in delivering a Table Topic.

When Diane experienced a severe concussion, she was unable to participate in meetings as she wanted. We wanted to hear news of her recovery because we missed her and cared deeply for her. I watched last year as she gradually rejoined meetings. She submitted an article of thanks for the club's support in last year's newsletter, making light of herself as the lady in "dark glasses and the funky hat." I was so pleased to see her again. She was determined. She attended half meetings, started taking on Table topics, and most wonderful, she trusted us to share her struggles.

I think this year has been one of overcoming for Diane. She has been an integral member of the executive, serving as secretary. She has always been ready to support me in my role and often distributes meeting minutes on the same night as the meeting! She works behind the scenes on Fundscrip, which helps our club financially. Each year, she spends hours dedicating her computer expertise to assist in producing a professional club newsletter. She also fulfilled her goal of presenting her Pathways icebreaker, a notable achievement for a person who had suffered concussive injury. Last February, she presented "Circle of Life" which told of her journey of recovery; her speech demonstrated courage with its raw feeling, mixed with computer puns and delightful family pictures to celebrate her new steps in life. Diane, I appreciate you as a friend and a valuable toastmaster.

Congratulations to this year's President's Choice Award Winner, Diane Gunn CC ALB

Evaluation: {continued from page 6}

items. Having others share observations and opinions about what was done well and what could be improved, enables continuous learning and improvement. It also develops a valuable skill – sensitively delivering feedback for better future performance.

Most adult learning is work-related, evaluated by a simple test to gauge retention. Evaluation in Toastmasters is more impactful because it supports meaningful learning and development over time, by raising self-awareness and reinforcing the positive, in a supportive environment.

Karen started in Toastmasters in 2001 in Hay River, NWT, has been in seven clubs (from Yellowknife to Idaho), and credits Toastmasters with her confidently presenting at professional events, and serving as a Board Chair for a non-profit. She works in evaluation for the Government of Alberta.



Rookie of the Year Award 2020

Lukasz Rozycki LD1

Each year a member who has joined within the last eighteen months is selected as “Rookie of the Year.” This is a person who has consistently demonstrated dedication to standards of excellence and has contributed to the club’s success.

This year’s winner joined Southern Lights in May of 2019 and has shown much enthusiasm and skill. He has had near perfect attendance and taken on almost every meeting role, and some roles several times. He executes his commitments with thoughtful preparation. We have enjoyed his creative speeches, from telling us about breadmaking to how different leadership styles would face another pandemic. He stepped up to participate in both the fall Humorous Speech Contest and the spring Table topics Contest. He also participated in a club public relations event last fall and assisted in the area contest as Official Greeter.

Lastly, this member showed initiative and leadership in offering to organize and deliver Zoom tutorials so that members could be familiar with our new meeting format during the pandemic. Members appreciated his willingness to help and share his technical expertise. I’d like to congratulate **Lukasz Rozycki** as the winner of the Rookie of the Year Award.



What Makes Southern Lights Special?

Year after year Southern Lights achieves the highest level of accomplishment in the Toastmasters organization. We help members achieve designations, mentor and support advanced members through the Advanced programs, and celebrate our DTMs. We attract new members because we are showing our community the advantages and growth that Toastmasters gives us—and we share our enthusiasm. Congratulations to Southern Lights for again achieving the President’s Distinguished Level. It says something that the past international president of Toastmaster’s International, our own Neil Wilkinson, counts Southern Lights as his home club. Neil, Marlene, Mike, Wayne and Darryl are celebrating 30 or more years as members of Southern Lights and Toastmasters International and they are the backbone of the club.

Southern Lights DCP – President’s Distinguished Award 2020

Toastmasters International

(Amazingly...10/10 Goals Achieved and More!)

2 CC—Eden Li, Wayne Sager

ACS—Juergen Abildt

ACB – Michelle St Louis, Nigel Bowles

ALB—Wayne Sager, Juergen Abildt, Michelle St. Louis

CL– Bob Wang (and also a Triple Crown Award winner for the combination of CL and two pathways)

Level 1—Lukasz Rozycki , Rhonda Lagace, Bob Wang, Lesley Revell

Level 2—Rhonda Lagace, Bob Wang, Lesley Revell

4 new members: Hao Hu, Ka Po Ng, Kevin Dawyd, Mike Kamal

Additional 4 more new members : Olga Abildt, Juergen Abildt, Tarun Mulle, Sanjay Kalra, Barb Turner

Dues submitted on time and officer list submitted on time.

Club Officer training completed by all officers in both the Fall and Spring training sessions.

Online Ovation Education Award Gold

Membership Resiliency Award

Note: New awards as a result of the pandemic have been announced by Toastmasters International. Southern Lights was the largest club in District 99 in 2018-19, and we GREW this year. While most clubs struggled, we met the challenge, and provided quality programming.

Past President's Message

Michelle St. Louis

2019/20

This year has been one like no other for Southern Lights Toastmasters. I presented a speech in the fall with the purpose of motivating people to be immunized for seasonal influenza, with my supporting evidence being the worldwide outbreak in 1918. Little did any of us imagine we would face a pandemic this very year, except there is no "shot" to protect us. Through September to March we enjoyed our usual meeting comradery. Each meeting showed the excellence that has become synonymous with Southern Lights.

In the role as President, I became more aware of the planning, effort, and time required for quality weekly meetings. I saw that the standard of our meetings is a team effort. The executive sets the stage, but each individual member plays an important role.

I have appreciated the support behind me on the executive. On reflection, I realize it was rather rash to accept the position as President when my toastmaster experience spans all of a brief four years. However, part of our club ethic is to allow people to stretch and grow. The executive allowed that for me. I thank the executive members for their support, encouragement, and guidance.

To all of you who are not on the executive, but are faithful members, you make up the main story of the club. You are the main actors on the stage set by the executive. It was inspiring to see you take on new, challenging roles, or agree to take part in speech contests. I am so pleased that we maintained a club culture that is safe and permits members to tackle new adventures in developing communication and leadership skills. In addition, I so appreciated members who took initiative to be leaders in the club by volunteering to greet at the door, or to become acquainted with a guest, introduce the guest, and provide information about our club. We can be proud of the cohesiveness and high standards that we live out.

In March, the COVID-19 virus that we thought was far away loomed over us, forcing unprecedented social closures. It soon became apparent that our milestone celebration of our fortieth anniversary would need to be postponed. We realized that we could no longer hold meetings in person. The public health orders for physical distancing threatened to crush all of our plans for the year. We were presented with a choice: Do we accept defeat, or do we adapt?

We adapted. Some conversations mulled about, the executive met on the Zoom platform to check it out, and then Lukasz offered Zoom tutorials. We were away. Meeting on Zoom presented new learning



opportunities and we helped each other. Each Zoom meeting seemed to be improved as we learned and were so pleased to have the ability to connect in this way. All of us showed dedication and enthusiasm to continue working towards our toastmaster goals and above all, embodied the quality of resilience.

As I noted in my opening, this has been a year like no other. We can all be proud that we are finishing the year in a position of triumph over adversity. We have become stronger, and I think, when we are able to resume in-person meetings, we will have a keener sense of appreciation of the human connection. Being your club President has given me much growth. It has been an honor and a privilege. Thank-you to every member. I look forward to supporting the new President and passing the gavel to a new President, allowing her to grow and offer another perspective to club leadership.

The 2020-21 Southern Lights Toastmaster's Club Executive

President: Diane Gunn CC ALB

Past President: Michelle St Louis ACB ALB

Treasurer: Lukasz Rozyki LD2

Secretary: Bob Wang MS2

VP Education: Marlene Petruch DTM

VP Public Relations: Darryl Hauge ACS ALB

VP Membership: Karen Carleton CC CL

Sergeant At Arms: Lucasz Rozycki LD1

Table Topics: Telling Sensational Stories

By: Karen Carleton, CC, CL

Context is king when you are delivering content - in speech, writing, teaching or mentoring. One of the best ways people learn is through telling relevant, engaging stories, which are typically memorable. To that end, you must *know your audience* – understand shared experiences, values and language ability. Early in my career I worked as an English as a Second Language instructor. I told a few jokes to my class that fell flat due to the students' lack of English skills! Later, as a seminar facilitator for construction supervisors, I delivered content with practical examples of site safety mishaps, using terms the participants could all relate to.

With impromptu speaking (table topics, job interviews) it's important to think about the topic(s) at hand (e.g. meeting theme, position tasks). What could you say about it that would *add value to the audience*? What examples could you share? Have you had a scary or funny related experience? Did you read something that the group would find interesting? How might you "take a left turn at Albuquerque" (to quote Wayne Sager, DTM), smoothly changing the subject to one you could better discuss? Whatever approach you adopt, be mentally prepared with at least *one* idea you could build on to explain, persuade, entertain, or promote reflection for the audience.

Table Topics Are Not Only Fun But Generate Unique Responses

When Karen Carleton was asked how to save our members from scary, hungry, ferocious bears, she thought it best to feed them Michelle's cats, and run for the hills! We're sure what Michelle thought of that. Karen's response might be different now that she is a cat owner!

Fine Points for Major Roles

By: Wayne Sager, DTM

It's the fine points that can be difference makers when it comes to winning or losing, mediocrity or greatness, and in Toastmasters, garnering new members and member retention. Having people feel that they are part of a sharp professionally run organization is what brings them in and keeps them in.

Learned skills at Toastmasters can be applied outside the club, skills including preparation, timing and a commitment to quality. Here are a few key meeting roles and some ideas for top performance.

Everything is better with proper preparation, and the role of Toastmaster is one at the top of the list. Making clear, legible notes that cue upcoming parts such as explanation of meeting segments, when we are voting or what's next set you up for success. Point form for speaking notes keeps your head up more. For speaker introductions you need to always think of setting them up, and obtaining some information to help. But be aware that you also have a responsibility to manage the time and the flow so editing an introduction to be effective but still brief is key. You are in control. No matter what, write it down with the presenter's name last, always! You should have your voice come up and be strong when you say the speaker's name.

Nice little bridges, (not the Confederation bridge), between

segments makes it smooth and professional looking. Watch experienced and skilled Toastmasters carefully when they execute this role and you will learn a lot. One little tip, always read the name of the next person up before you start their introduction. This helps prevent those embarrassing last second blank-outs

Table Topic Master - Preparation is key as well. Use the theme if at all possible. Pre-choose your speakers from the agenda or EasySpeak- Best to have a "No go" list- Speakers, TTE - TM- GE. Start with members with no roles, then minor roles - guests by permission (3rd or 4th!) Questions should be short, general, non controversial. Your job is to include people in the meeting. Remember with your explanation of the process and the length of the questions limits the time for participation. Make it fun, but make it work.

For everyone a well run meeting means good time management. Speakers, rehearse your speeches, watch the timer and always think of the time you are allotted and how much you are taking. A meeting with good time management is impressive to anyone looking in.

Paying attention to the little things, preparing well and making the commitment and standing by it, that's what makes a great meeting and a great club. It's in your hands to take care of the little things!