



# TOASTMASTERS NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019

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Fluor Communicators has had the blessing of support from the Fluor Calgary office since day one. Madison McLennan has written an article to share with the entire office to commemorate our 40th year:

## *Celebrating the success of Fluor Communicators*

By Madison McLennan, Fluor Communications Intern



A few memories from Fluor Communicators.

Toastmasters International is a non-profit organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. Headquartered in Englewood, Colorado, the organization's membership exceeds 357,000 in more than 16,600 clubs in 143 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators, and leaders.

Fluor Canada has its own branch of Toastmasters International entitled the Fluor Communicators Club. The club provides a supportive and positive learning experience to empower members to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

This year, Communicators are celebrating an impressive 40 years as a club at Fluor Canada!

Every Tuesday from noon to 1:00 p.m., Communicators gather in Fluor's EpiCentre or training room to expand their public speaking and leadership skills. The club is open to anyone interested in developing their talents or expanding their network. In addition to Fluor employees, the club is also home to some members of the local community.

Daniel Mitcheltree is the president of the Fluor Communicators club and when asked why someone should join, he said:

"You can get so much out of Toastmasters! In addition to developing your public speaking skills, Toastmasters meetings offer an excellent opportunity to broaden your network and meet people from around the company and the wider community."

The club promotes a positive environment and each member has a different skillset to provide support and guidance to fellow members. Meetings are very professional and they follow a specific agenda to stay on track. Toastmaster's members take turns chairing the meeting and guiding the various segments including a joke of the day, table topics, formally prepared speeches, and evaluations. Everyone has the opportunity to speak if they wish to do so.

Daniel also highlighted why he joined Toastmasters a few years ago.

"I joined because I wanted to become a more confident speaker. Along the way, I discovered the great community spirit in the club and embraced opportunities to develop my leadership skills. Anyone who is interested in joining, but may be a little hesitant, should come and attend a meeting as a guest. It will give you the opportunity to see the benefits the club can provide you first hand."

Effective leadership and strategic communication are key elements of the success of employees and of the company as a whole. Congratulations to the Fluor Communicators Club on providing a great development and networking opportunity for employees in the Calgary office for 40 years and counting!



## Member Testimonials



### Lisa Listgarten

Member from 1999 to 2006



I remember doing my first 'table topic' (more than 20 years ago!) . . . having to speak for two minutes off-the-cuff, with no preparation, on what I thought should have been a fairly generic easy topic. I couldn't do it. I didn't know what to say and I stumbled my way through it. But my fellow club members were supportive and encouraging. And so I kept practicing 'table topics'. And I eventually became good at it. I even ended up successfully competing in table topics at the area, district, and regional levels. That experience has served me well through my career, giving me the ability to better handle those unexpected moments when I need to respond with confidence on the fly.



### Tammy Frenette

Member from 2004 to 2011, 2017 to present



Congratulations Fluor Communicators Club in celebrating your 40th anniversary! I am honoured to be a member of an amazing club and support as the Fluor executive sponsor. The club has endured through the cyclical cycles of our business here in Calgary over the decades. As Fluor is a community engaged company, so is the Fluor Communicators Club which is open to the local community to join as members. Year over year, the club members continue to demonstrate their commitment, engagement, and support of fellow club members to succeed with their goals, provide mentorship, and constructive feedback. This club has demonstrated its success in the development of our past, current, and our future leaders in the company and our community.

Toastmasters provides the opportunity to learn during every meeting. Whether I am receiving direct feedback or listening to others receive the feedback, there is always a take away. The club has provided me the confidence to not be as nervous to either stand in front of a room or be across the conference room table and present.



### Claire Lyster

Member from 2009 to 2013



It was so great to be part of the Fluor Communicators Club! It gave me useful tools and the practice to enhance my communications skills, which I have been able to apply in the work environment. We often think of Toastmasters as just a public speaking club. In my experience, I can say that although public speaking is one of the major aspects of the program, the learning environment focuses on communication as a whole. Some of the things I learned were how to put cohesive ideas together for a presentation, organize and chair a meeting, think on my feet, and deliver my point to an audience—all of which was done within the safety of a fun and friendly environment! At the beginning, I pushed myself to join Toastmasters because I thought *it was good for me*, but I quickly realized that I actually really enjoyed it and I looked forward to the meetings every Tuesday! Congratulations Fluor Communicators on 40 years!



### Jason Kwang

Member from 2007 to 2010



Toastmasters was a great way to meet people and build my confidence in public speaking. The encouraging and collaborative environment made it very easy to let your guard down, and be okay with failing. It encouraged you to learn from mistakes, push yourself beyond your existing comfort level, and accept constructive criticism. For these reasons, I have always recommended people to join your club. Kudos to you, Fluor Communicators, on reaching your 40th anniversary. Huge thank you for being such an instrumental part of my career development and thank you for positively impacting so many others in our Calgary community!



## Member Accomplishments from 2018 to 2019



**Distinguished Toastmasters Awards**  
L-R: Jocelyn Hastie, Cindy Hoerger, Lisa Branch, Helga Bender, Daniel Mitcheltree



**International Speech Contest**  
L-R: Daniel Mitcheltree, Matt Fox (2nd), Lisa Branch (1st), Marcy Field (3rd), Helga Bender



**Toastmaster of the Year**  
Helga Bender (with Lisa Branch)

### Leadership Awards

- ▶ Tammy Frenette – CL
- ▶ Daniel Mitcheltree – CL
- ▶ Joseph Purcell – CL
- ▶ Helga Bender – ALB, ALS, DTM
- ▶ Lisa Branch – CL, ALB, ALS, DTM

### Speech Awards

- ▶ Isaac Venneman – CC
- ▶ Tammy Frenette – ACB
- ▶ Dmitri Gordeev – ACB

### Pathways Achievements

- ▶ Lisa Branch – Strategic Relationship 1, 2, 3, 4
- ▶ Susan M. Brown – Effective Coaching 1, 2
- ▶ Marcy Field – Visionary Communication 1, 2
- ▶ Christina Kruis – Visionary Communication 1, Effective Coaching 1
- ▶ Matthew Fox – Motivational Strategies 1, 2, 3
- ▶ Helga Bender – Effective Coaching 1, 2, 3, 4

### Contests

#### International Speech Contest

- ▶ Club: Lisa Branch (1st), Matt Fox (2nd), Marcy Field (3rd)
- ▶ Area: Matt Fox (1st), Lisa Branch (2nd)
- ▶ Division: Matt Fox (1st)

#### Humorous Speech Contest

- ▶ Club: Dmitri Gordeev (1st), Joseph Purcell (2nd)
- ▶ Area: Dmitri Gordeev (2nd)

Legend: ACB – Advanced Communicator Bronze, ALB – Advanced Leader Bronze, ALS – Advanced Leader Silver, CC – Competent Communicator, CL – Competent Leader, DTM – Distinguished Toastmaster



## The Road to Moose Jaw and the District 42 International Speech Contest

**Matt Fox**

Member from 2012 to 2019



*It's a long way to Tipperary, It's a long way to go.* <sup>(1)</sup>  The song should say Moose Jaw and if you have never driven the several hundred kilometres, it takes about eight hours from Calgary. That's where I am headed to compete in the District International speech contest. How did I get here? What happened during the long journey of speech development, and at both the Area and Division contests? Let me share this with you, so you are ready for your own trip to the District contest.

Before we get going, have you ever noticed how most of the speeches we do at toastmasters get delivered ONCE, then put in the bottom drawer and forgotten about? Is this reflective of the hard work you put in, thinking of a good speech idea, the hours spent writing and crafting it, the days spent practicing . . . to deliver it once and then placing it out of sight, out of mind. It doesn't seem right, does it? Certainly if your career hung on your speech, or you were instructing a class with a prepared presentation, you would shape it, craft it, and take it to the next level.

This is exactly what happens when you take part in speech contests and progress to the next level. I have often delivered a presentation or speech, and upon reflection said to myself "I could do that much better if I were to do it again". This is exactly what we need to do with our contest speeches—tweak, improve, enhance; not just the script, but the delivery, the gestures, and the connection with the audience. For the international speech contest this year, after I won at club, and knowing who I was up against at Area contest, if I was to have a chance I needed to make some changes. I looked at all the evaluations I had received for previous deliveries and also sent my script to some trusted Toastmaster friends. The feedback was good, constructive, but specific and targeted on improvement; however, I felt conflicted. I trusted my friends, but they were making suggestions that would alter my speech, alter the layout, and alter my own thoughts. I felt very resistant to the suggestions . . . for a few days; but I slowly thought about the ideas, shaped them, and carefully inserted the elements I felt worked into my speech. WOW, it felt better, sounded better, and when I delivered it at the Area contest, I won. It was better!

Inspired by what had occurred, I quickly signed up for the "circle of gold", another opportunity to gain feedback from multiple people but in a more formal Toastmasters environment and based upon a 'live' delivery of my speech. Again lots of constructive comments, which is the whole idea . . . many ideas on how the speech could be improved. A little bit of advice though when gaining multiple pieces of constructive feedback; you don't need to incorporate all, some, or any of the feedback. Only use what works for you, what feels good, and what you are comfortable with. Never lose touch with your speech . . . it is, after all, your speech and if you use all the feedback you can easily lose the connection to your own message. Okay, I did pick up a few solid ideas and quickly built them into my speech, back to practicing hard and long to nail the updates.

By the time I took part in the Division D contest at Nanton, I was onto revision 11 of my speech and had practiced it more than 50 times. I was speaker number five of six and while the previous four speakers delivered their speeches, I was going through my opening, my close, and staying focused. I felt good during my delivery, and ultimately all the feedback, the crafting of the speech and the practice proved fruitful, 1st place and an invite to compete at the District 42 convention and the international speech contest. My journey to Moose Jaw was complete; it was a long road, but well worth it. I have learned so much about speech development, receiving and incorporating feedback, and finally accepting that I CAN make my speech better, with a little help from my friends. I challenge you to pull out a previously delivered speech from that bottom drawer, review your feedback, gain some more, and present it once again. You will be amazed at the results, and this is excellent practice for your own road trip to the next District contest!

## Message from VP Public Relations



Hello fellow Toastmasters,

I've been a member of Fluor Communicators since first joining Fluor two years ago. In my time here, I progressed from absolutely fearing public speaking to being able to get in front of a crowd with confidence. I still have a long way to go, but I have no doubts that Fluor Communicators will help me meet my personal development goals. Putting together this newsletter has shown me that many others over the years have benefited from their time at Toastmasters. Congratulations to Fluor Communicators for 40 wonderful years of growth and development!

Yours truly,  
Leah Villanueva  
VP Public Relations

If you would like to submit an article for the next newsletter, please email me at [leah.villanueva@fluor.com](mailto:leah.villanueva@fluor.com)

1. Williams/Judge, *It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary* (1912)