



# TOASTMASTERS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

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## Year End Recap

We had a fun year end get together organized and chaired by Kaveh Shojei! At our event, we had a ton of food to share while watching speeches by Lisa Branch and James Chau. Our executive committee for the following year was inducted and awards were presented. Congratulations to our rookie of the year, Isaac Venneman, and our Toastmaster of the year, Helga Bender!

Our club for 2017/2018 gained presidents distinguished status for a fourth straight year in a row. Hopefully we can continue the legacy this year.



**Rookie of the Year**

Isaac Venneman



**Toastmaster of the Year**

Helga Bender



**Incoming Executive Committee**

**President**

Daniel Mitcheltree

**Co-VPs Education**

Lisa Branch and Marcy Field

**VP Membership**

Jackie Rainforth

**VP Public Relations**

Leah Villanueva

**VP Finance**

James Chau

**VP Admin**

Carolyn Triscott

**VP Fun**

Kaveh Shojaei



## Message from the President



After a hopefully fun-filled and joyous summer, welcome back to another leg of the never-ending journey that is self-improvement! I am honoured and excited to be at the helm of this distinguished toastmasters club for the 2018/2019 season.

You don't have to look far to see what a great bunch our members are. Our club has celebrated some impressive achievements recently, with two members becoming newly-minted Distinguished Toastmasters (DTM). I want to congratulate Lisa Branch and Helga Bender on this phenomenal achievement! Both of you bring so much enthusiasm and know-how to the club, and we are truly fortunate to have you as role models that give us all something to strive for.

Look out for events coming up soon, including a club speech contest (evaluation) in early October and the area contest at the end of October. Contests are always a fun way of switching things up and I encourage everyone to come out and participate as a contestant or in a supporting role. Whether you're trying to close out your Competent Communicator or you're looking to harness all the new and exciting possibilities in the Pathways program, come join us this season. I look forward to growing as a speaker and leader together with you!

## Distinguished Toastmasters

In Toastmasters, the Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award is the highest level of achievement. This past summer we had two of our members achieve this prestigious award: Lisa Branch and Helga Bender. These two members both possess insane leadership, interpersonal, and public speaking skills and they are an inspiration to us all. Congratulations Lisa and Helga! Please see below for their thoughts on achieving DTM:



**Helga Bender**

I remember that cold January day, trying to find the Fluor Communicators club for the first time. The meeting was somewhere across the street and you had to buzz to get in. It was my New Year's resolution to improve my speaking, but I was nervous and a little lost. I had decided that if I was late, I would leave and forget about Toastmasters. But fortunately, I found it and the club president, Chris Demler buzzed me in.

Five years later, I am still here and, to my surprise, achieving my DTM. Originally, I planned to do the basic 10 speeches and quit but on the way, I met amazing, encouraging people with fascinating and fun stories and I stayed on. Together we learned, struggled and cheered each other on and improved. About a year after I started, I decided that to get the most out of my membership I should tailor my projects so maybe one day I might achieve my DTM.

I am grateful for the many Toastmasters that helped me and the rewarding experience of helping others too. I am also grateful for pressure cooker speech contests that forced me to improve till I was competing against a TMI World semi-finalist speaker! This growth also helped improve my life coaching and expand my personal speaking business. In my DTM roles, I have been very impressed by the warm welcome other clubs gave me and the impact they had on their communities.

The road to my DTM was not always easy but it has paid back in tremendous personal growth and maturity and rewarding individual and team contribution. How about you, maybe in five years (or less) will you too be able to look back on an important journey of growth that has taken you into a brighter, rewarding future, with a brand new DTM in your pocket?



**Lisa Branch**

Achieving the Distinguished Toastmaster award is the result of perseverance, personal growth and vision. From facing intimidating situations, daunting tasks, and feeling less than capable, I was encouraged, supported, and applauded as I learned new skills, grew in confidence and accepted more responsibility. One of my biggest life lessons was a shift in my task-oriented perspective of checking off the box to recognize and appreciate the people-centred activities that occur through evaluation, mentoring, and various leadership roles. There is exponential, synergistic and even super-heroic power in the Toastmasters program, but ultimately the power is in the people themselves. It has not been an independent, individual accomplishment but one of community effort. Thank you to each one of you who has been a part of my Toastmasters journey. The best is yet to come!





## Get to Know our Members:

### James Chau

**1. How long have you been a member of Fluor Communicators Toastmasters Club?**

I've been a member for about a year.

**2. What was your primary reason for wanting to join Toastmasters?**

My primary reason for joining was to brush up on my public speaking skills and build confidence speaking in front of larger audiences.

**3. What is your favorite hobby/activity?**

My favorite hobby is working out.

**4. What is your favorite book or movie or TV series?**

My favorite movie trilogy is Lord of the Rings.

**5. Please share something about yourself – Do you have an education background you'd like to share, a personal success story, or anything you have or hope to accomplish in the next year – Professional, Personal, Travel, etc.**

I like to eat and I eat a lot. I have completed the Uncle Moe's D-Rex Donair Challenge (~3 lbs) and at all-you-can-eat sushi, my record for sashimi eating is 135 pieces.



### Marcy Field

After hearing about Toastmasters for many years, a friend invited me to attend a meeting and I joined in February 2018. A desire to enhance my speaking skills is my motivation. Over the last few months I've discovered Toastmasters provides much more, which I am keen to help raise awareness of with my extended network. Membership changed my perspective and understanding of what the club is and does.

A city girl transported to farm life several years ago, I'm grateful to be active in a variety of things – gardening, entertaining, travel, community development, and grandparenting (my favourite job thus far). Studying leadership, political science, rural municipal governments, and democracy consumes a significant portion of my time. Through my business I work with individuals and organizations helping them tell their story and build community using social media marketing.

Currently, my favourite book is *New Power: How Power Works in Our Hyperconnected World - How to Make It Work for You* by Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms. It provides engaging awareness of what is infiltrating and shaping our society. Awareness, I believe, is the beginning of change.

A soon to be published author, I'm busy interviewing and connecting with rural municipal councillors (past and present) within western Canada to record their stories and learn why they choose/chose to serve their communities in this role. I'm hoping to gain insight and help community members better engage with each other to create better places for people to live, work, play, and create memories. This has been my vision and desire since high school, which I only recently saw as an underlying driver across the years.

Know I'm excited to see where the Toastmaster portion of my journey takes me. I look forward to hearing club members' stories, growing and connecting.



### Practice Makes Perfect By Isaac Venneman

Everyone has had to speak publicly at least a few times in their life, from elementary school through to their professional life. Everyone has varying degrees of success. Most people are nervous, some speak too fast, some speak too monotone, some stand rigid, some are just naturals. I fell, and still continue to fall, solidly in the former categories.

However it's never really effected my education, grades, or life too significantly until I joined the workforce. Standing in front of your peers, managers, and clients and delivering a dry, confusing speech can really hurt and can have big consequences such as losing a client or losing a promotion. It doesn't matter if you are the smartest, hardest worker around, if you can't communicate to others in a way that they understand and get them on your side, you might as well pack up your bags.

Over a year ago I found myself paying more attention to some great speakers in jealousy. You know those people, they just command a room with their voice and you can't take your eye off of them. It doesn't matter what the subject is, you just can't help but believe what they are saying. That's what I want. To be able to walk into any meeting room, with any client, and be able to talk about any subject with little to no preparation and convince them to believe in my solutions.

Before I even started the competent communicator manual I knew many of the main speech tenets such as hand gestures, eye contact, body movement, and vocal variety. I could just

never get them to work in sync. If I focused on one, I would miss another. Lots of hands, but no eye contact. Great vocal variety, but no body movement. With presentation so few and far in between I found myself losing any progress I made. I needed a comfortable place to speak and speak often.

That's where Toastmasters came in. After that first meeting I knew it was a place where people were encouraging, patient, and non-judgmental. I could calm my nerves knowing that nothing was on the line, that a single sentence wouldn't make or break a meeting, and that was invaluable to me. I couldn't wait to speak. Every speech in the CC manual helped hone my skills and the feedback, especially the encouragement from members only lifted my confidence. Even when I didn't have a speech I had the opportunity to learn as a Grammarian or Ah Counter. I could even speak impromptu as a Toastmaster and help critique others as an evaluator, which are invaluable learning perspectives.

Toastmasters gave me a platform to practice, practice, practice. I can speak in public often, without judgement, and continually build that speaker intuition that I was inspired by. As they say, practice makes perfect.



## Toastmasters in Real Life by Matthew Fox

How was your summer? Did you travel to faraway exotic lands and sample delightful foods, experience our wonderful province, Canada, the mountains and nature, maybe you relaxed near home and shared time with friends, and did you find time to put your Toastmaster skills to use?

I spent a relaxing summer mostly at home and on local trips with family and friends, and yes I DID put to work my Toastmaster skills. Having been a Toastmaster for a few years now, I enjoy the opportunity to practice what we all learn in our club, how to engage the audience, pull them into a story, craft a strong message, entertain, inspire, motivate. . . would you agree?

It is very easy to become comfortable speaking in our Toastmasters club, our SAFE environment, where our friends will encourage us and we can grow. But just like taking part in competitions, we need to s-t-r-e-t-c-h ourselves to become stronger. Is it always easy? No, stepping into that new place, in front of that new audience, opening ourselves to the big bad world. . . being vulnerable. Surprise, it's not so bad, and the people out there are just like the people in our club, encouraging, and friendly.

Ok, what DID I get up to this summer? I created a short video for our Fluor intranet and I was emcee at a family wedding. Both activities way outside of what we do in our club, but we build good speaking bones in Toastmasters, so why not use these skills and embrace opportunity!!!

For my video I wanted to communicate a message about what I am doing at work, make it relatable, add some analogies, get a message across. I offered to do a I am Fluor video and started writing my script. These videos are often filmed with the subject sitting at a desk. I wanted to change it up a little, make it more dynamic. When a media colleague was visiting from the UK, we got his iPhone, a gyro on a handheld device, a microphone, and headed out. We filmed me walking towards the camera, we tried different locations and reviewed how the gestures came across on screen. It was very different looking and talking to a small lens, but also fun and a great learning opportunity. I now have a genuine respect for reporters and all people who talk to the lens.

How about being the emcee at a wedding! Daunting maybe, but also a chance to help family celebrate. Again very different from a Toastmasters speech, but the bones are the same. Structure, vocal variety and delivery, engaging the audience, feeding off their cues. This also takes lots of alignment with the bride and groom. Write a script, share it with them, add some humour, find out what they want. My golden rules were do not upset the bride and groom, and it is about them not me. This latter item was something I focused on. NO stories about me, it was all about the happy couple, facilitation, flow, and fun. As I spoke I wanted the audience to be looking at the bride and groom and laughing with them, the stories about them, the approved jokes about them, my words to cause a smile. As I reflect upon this activity it sounds a little complex doesn't it, but it wasn't. My two rules proved good, and the wedding was a huge success and the bride and groom grateful for my help.

Yes I didn't travel to exotic lands, see amazing structures or meet some famous people, but I did have a memorable summer, my Toastmasters skills came in good use and I learnt so much. I no longer hide from public speaking, in fact I enjoy it. Next time someone looks for a speaker, what will you do?

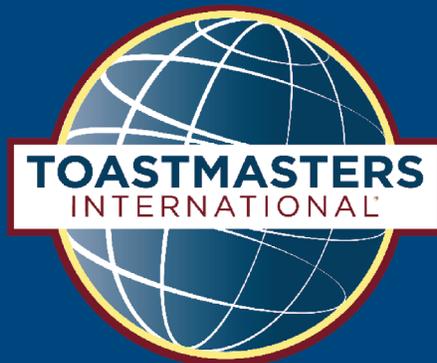
### Important News:

- ▶ Fluor Communicators was one of eight clubs nominated for the President of the Year Award for our division for 2017-2018. The award will be presented at the Division D speech contest in November.
- ▶ Our Club Evaluation contest is set for Tuesday, October 2, 2018.

### Message from VP Public Relations

Hi everyone! As VP PR, I decided to add in something that I love into these newsletters, and that's books. For this first newsletter, I'd like to give book recommendation. The book I'd like to recommend is: *Talk Like Ted* by Carmine Gallo. It's a great read about how to talk like the best speakers of TED. TED is a nonprofit that shares powerful talks around the world about technology, entertainment, and design, and the caliber of speaking is amazing! My sister purchased this book for me once I joined Toastmasters and I think there's some really interesting tips in there. Give it a read and let me know what you think. I hope you all enjoyed this newsletter. 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).





## Contact Details

**<http://fluorcommunicators.easy-speak.org/>**

Club Website – Sign up for meeting roles, Request a speech, view your speech and leadership progress, and more.

**<https://www.toastmasters.org/>**

Toastmasters International Website

**<http://d42tm.org/>**

District Website

**<https://www.facebook.com/toastmasters.calgary.south>**

Club Facebook page. Like the page and follow the club.

**Club Meetings (closed for the summer):**

Starting in September 2017. Every Tuesday at 12:05 p.m. at the Fluor Offices located at 55 Sunpark Plaza S.E., Calgary, AB T2X 3R4

**Prospective Members:**

Contact Kevin Koopman, our club president  
Email: [kevin.koopman@fluor.com](mailto:kevin.koopman@fluor.com)

**Come Join Us! You won't regret it!**

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*For more information, visit the Toastmasters Community on Connections!*