

DOGWOOD BARKER

Newsletter of Dogwood Toastmasters, an Atlanta Toastmasters Club since 1955 September 2007

We meet every Saturday at 8 a.m. at

First Alliance Church, 2512 N. Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30329.

Visit us at our regular meetings or on the web at <http://www.dogwoodtoastmasters.org>

To find out what is new, watch meeting videos, and leave comments on our blog.

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Current Club Officers

July 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007

- President: Rajnish
- VP Education: Jerry
- VP Membership: Kevin W
- VP Public Relations: Gloria
- Secretary: Ellery
- Treasurer: Tom
- Sergeant at Arms: Ann M
- Social Chair: Charlie
- Contest Chairs: Kevin and Josephine

John (winner), Tom, and Sharyn participated.

- Club Evaluation Contest, July 28, 2007: John (1st place), JG (2nd place), and Sharyn (3rd place) took home prizes.
- Area Humorous Speech and Evaluation Contest, August 11, 2007: John represented the club in both and placed second in the Humorous Speech Contest with his hilarious presentation <Granite, granite, granite!>.

Educational Achievements since July 1, 2007

- Edwinna, ALS and DTM
- Darryl, CC
- Fran, CC
- Insook, CC

Edwinna Becomes Distinguished Toastmaster

*Edwinna retraces her steps leading up to
the highest award Toastmasters
International bestows and encourages
everyone to aspire to it.*

When I came to my first Dogwood Toastmasters meeting in November of 1992, I had no idea I would many years later receive the Distinguished Toastmasters Award. I actually never set it as a goal. I just kept doing "the next thing," and after many years, the only thing I hadn't done was the DTM.

Contest Results

- Club Humorous Speech and Evaluation Contest, July 28, 2007:

The reason I decided to go ahead and work toward the DTM was because everything I had done in Toastmasters had been worthwhile—every contest I entered, every speech I prepared, every Table Topic I got up the courage to answer, every new member I mentored, every club office I held. I figured the three projects I would have to do for DTM would also be worthwhile. If I didn't go ahead and do them, I would never know what I had missed.

My first challenge was to complete the High Performance Leadership Program. I had to choose a project, which could be in my church or community or in Toastmasters. I remembered how I always took on new activities and so never had time to clean out my basement, which was a disaster. So I decided that the only "new" thing I wanted to take on was the "old" problem of getting rid of clutter. I organized my neighborhood into a community yard sale and counted that for my leadership program.

The second thing I did was to serve as mentor for a new club. Georgia Toastmasters put me in touch with a new club that needed a mentor. It was in an accounting firm in Peachtree Center, so for six months I would get up before dawn on Friday mornings and ride Marta downtown to attend the Grant Thornton club meetings. When the alarm clock would go off so early, I wished I could stay in bed a little longer, but as soon as I got to the meetings, I really enjoyed them. I was amazed at how much I knew about Toastmasters that I could share with a new club.

My final activity was to serve for a year as an Area Governor. This was the activity I had always not wanted to do, but it was the only thing left between me and a DTM, so I took the plunge and did it. The second month I was an Area Governor, I

attended seventeen Toastmasters meetings in twenty-four days! Obviously during that time, Toastmasters totally took over my life, and I didn't have time for much else. But while I was at each meeting, I enjoyed myself. It was a very exciting time. All the things I did as Area Governor that were out of my comfort zone—attending many different clubs, conducting contests, asking people to do things—helped immensely to boost my confidence in myself. Now that it's over, I can say that it was a very positive, growing experience.

Although I joined Dogwood about seven months before Yolande did, she quickly zoomed ahead of me in accomplishments. She served as my mentor while I was working on my DTM. She was always encouraging, knowledgeable, light-hearted, kind and understanding. With her in our club, all of us should be able to earn DTMs!

Message from a Club Officer

Rajnish reflects on his past and present term as Club President.

I am so glad that finally I am putting these thoughts in writing. Often many members have asked me what have been my personal and public aspirations as the president of Dogwood Toastmasters. Now that my term as president is soon going to come to an end, this writing is going to serve as a good reminder and booster for what I need to do in the next few months.

Usually people take leadership roles when they feel the need to lead something, e.g. when they feel that they can make the organization a better one. Dogwood Toastmasters does not really need to have a different or better direction. It already has a good self-motivated membership base, with a well-defined process in place. That is why I really didn't feel that

Dogwood needed a leader. But I chose to take the president role for a very humble reason: I just wanted to experience being a leader. And, I am very happy that it has been a rewarding experience, thanks to the members and such an enthusiastic executive committee we have.

At the beginning of the current term, our executive committee had decided to focus on three things: 1) Improve meeting attendance; 2) put more effort into membership building, and; 3) improve our club's web presence. With our improved Google rank, a redesigned website, and having our own blog, we are in a very strong position to attract guests who use the Internet to find a club.

Our membership has been steady and in good standing. To improve it further, our VP of Membership has already been taking great steps: Creating a new flyer, approaching guests enthusiastically, and motivating friends to visit the club. We do get a good number of guests at the meetings. If we continue giving them a memorable impression by having fun meetings, I am sure we will continue to maintain a solid membership base in the future as well.

We need a healthy attendance (at least 15 members) to be able to conduct a smooth meeting. During summer time, a good attendance becomes a challenge because so many members go on vacation. But now that summer is over, we have already noticed that our meeting participation has improved a lot. We need to continue encouraging each other to attend meetings regularly. It not only helps ourselves keep our skills fresh, but it also helps other

members who get to hear and learn from you and your evaluations.

Very soon, we will need to have a fresh set of leaders to take Dogwood to the next level. I sincerely hope that you come forward to take a leadership role - whatever modest or big aspirations you may have, I can assure you that Dogwood Toastmasters will give you a rewarding experience.

Acknowledgments to Social Event Hosts and Organizers

- Josephine: International Potluck, June 9, 2007.
- Gloria: Movie <Dream Girls> at the Fox, July 11, 2007.
- Dr. Gee: Dim Sum Brunch, August 25, 2007.
- Charlie: Dogwood Picnic, this month – stay tuned for the announcement!

Comings and Goings

- Insook: Moved to North Carolina in July.
- Ben: Rejoining after a hiatus.

Sneak Peek at Next Issue

- Digital Dogwood: In-depth look at the redesigned website that is useful to members and friendly to guests.