

CAPITAL NEWS

CAPITAL TOASTMASTERS #693720

Located in Area 44, Division C, District 7, Region 1

A TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume XXV Issue 12
December 2025

A COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION FOR BETTER LISTENING, THINKING, AND SPEAKING SKILLS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the...	
PRESIDENT	1
EDUCATION	2
SECRETARY	2
COMEDY SPORTS	4
VP – PUBLIC RELATIONS	4
FACEBOOK PAGE	5
TREASURER	5
SERGEANT AT ARMS	5
Achievements	
-Member	6
Greetings from Oregon Cure	7
Year in Highlights	9
TI Toolbox	15
Calendar of Events	16
Shout Out!	17



MONTHLY THEME:

The Power of Building Community

from the PRESIDENT

What do you mean 2026 is right around the corner?

I don't know how it's gone for anyone else, but this year has sped by like a fast-travel button push on a favorite game for me. (I know we have a lot of gamers in the club who understand.) While this year has been anything but a game, it has been a seriously rewarding one. From the moment I was fortunate enough to be voted into this body, the satisfactions have kept increasing with each meeting, class, and accomplishments of our membership. And we've had a lot of the latter.

One of the things that I wanted to enhance when I was granted the presidency was to ensure that our club best met the part of our mission that speaks to the supportive parts. To me, that meant our club needed to be supportive for every one of us, no matter where we came from. It's not that it wasn't to some degree already, but it hasn't always been a place where everyone who was working on their growth felt welcomed as if it was a place for them.

In case you hadn't noticed this yourself, look around the room during our holiday event this month with a critical eye. See if you can see what I see/feel as I look around our club now. This year, with the hand-off from our immediate past president, Theron, who set some amazing standards within our club, we have been able to come a long ways towards the vision I came in with. That's a testimonial to every member in the club who is here for the reasons of the TI vision below — to improve our communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

For me, that's something to celebrate as we attend our end-of-the-year celebration. It's something I look forward to our building on in the New Year as we begin a new era of opportunities for education and growth in our club. We can't wait to tell you all about it and share in next year's satisfactions together with you.



@CapitalToastmastersSalemOR

Toastmasters International's Vision

Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.



from the VP – EDUCATION

Well 2025 is soon to be over and I am struggling to know what to say. This year has been a series of successes for the club. Due to the hard work of dedicated people behind the scenes, we have had an excellent year. From the “Voice” mentorship program to Stefyni winning the area speech contest to Capital taking home the win at the debate, it has been a year of accomplishment.

I feel privileged to have been a small part of this. In the spirit of thankfulness and gratitude, I am happy to have seen so many people grow and learn with me. It is the highlight of my week when I see people give Icebreaker speeches that let me know a little about them and why they are trying to grow. I love seeing the support that members both old and new give to each other.

So now on to our education mission for the New Year. From the town hall I still have the names of everyone who volunteered to teach classes next year. We are still waiting on our proposals to get approved and I will put everyone on call outs to talk. I want to focus on what classes the club thinks will benefit the greatest number of people. Thank you again to all the people who offered to help. I look forward to this next year.

Happy holidays everyone



from the SECRETARY

Being Secretary has come with more challenges than I anticipated, one of which is balancing working at OCE with my official Secretary duties. But what's a little challenge without obstacles? I know that I'm still learning, but I'll figure it out. I will do my best with honor, dedication, integrity and enthusiasm. Thank you all for your vote of confidence and support in this role. I look forward to continue serving you all throughout the next year. Thank you for making me an integral part of this community.



Our holiday event will have us hosting the professional improv group Comedy Sportz. Improv is much like our table topics, but with a funny twist. Contestants are given random impromptu scenarios in which they will play out. The result is usually pretty hilarious.

The performers would like to do a Q&A with the audience. They asked us to think about any burning questions you'd like to ask about improv or about the performance. They look forward to engaging with you and answering all of your questions.

MEETING THEMES

December
The Power of Building
Community & Holiday Event

MEETING GUESTS

Gwendolyn Avington | Imm. Past District 7 Director
Kyle Hedquist | Past President – Capital Toastmasters and more
Ariana Waters | Director of Communications – P.O.W.E.R.
Jesse Gomez | Toastmaster Prospect
Richard Steadman | Owner – Portland Comedy/Comedy Sportz
Eric Zipper | Improv Comedian
Dillan Pilorget | Improv Comedian



from the VP – PUBLIC RELATIONS

Within Oregon's prison system, the power of building community is something that I think is really only possible at OSP. Prisons by nature, are divisive and segregated. Even at OSP, we have areas where we sit and areas where we don't or can't sit. Yet here, we come together and work together more than most other examples of prison in America. This year, I got to enjoy an Asian/Pacific Island cultural event, a Juneteenth event through the Uhuru Sasa cultural club. I got to go to the Lakota Club's Pow-Wow and in September, the Hispanic Heritage Celebration.

Based on how prison politics usually look like, the most that I could have expected to be able to enjoy was the Hispanic Heritage event and maybe Juneteenth if this was anywhere else. When I went to these events, I wasn't uniquely privileged. I saw people of all ethnicities and backgrounds at each of these events and our club is also a great example of the inclusive community that OSP offers.

It's easy to stay in our comfort zones, but OSP gives us a great opportunity to expand our community beyond prison affiliations. I see many of you at our club meetings, sitting with and getting to know others who you may not have ever considered talking to before. That's the power of building community. It's so powerful that people have come from different states just to see what we're doing here.

We hear a lot about the Norway model, which may be too good to be true for this country. But the OSP model is very real and has transformed so many of you beyond what you ever thought possible, just like it has me. That is all due to the community that we have here at OSP, which includes all of you. Thank you for making this community one that truly inspires us to change.



@CapitalToastmastersSalemOR

I've added the Capital Toastmaster's Facebook page here so that you can tell your friends and family. I will also have it on the front page from here on out.

This month's FB postings were:

#LeeHays for Toastmaster of the month

#RosarioJumpingBull for being elected Sergeant At Arms for the Uhuru Sasa Cultural Club

For those of you who are wondering why we posted something related to another club, that's because we like to highlight any of you who demonstrate leadership in the community, *especially* outside of Toastmasters.

Let me know what you're up to and of any milestones that you accomplish and maybe we can post you on our FB page so your people can see what you're up to in here.



from the TREASURER

I wish everyone a spectacular holiday and that all of you enjoy the celebration we're having the 10th of December. It's literally been a rollercoaster year with all of the great events we've had the pleasure to partake in. I hope the upcoming year is the same, with fundraisers and of course the banquet and special events that will sum up our year. Again, thank you everyone who made donations and continue to make them.
-Your treasurer: Miguel.



from the SERGEANT AT ARMS

It's hard to believe that 2025 will be soon over. However, when I look back at how much this club and its members have accomplished, it tends to fit the somewhat-seeming absence of time. This year, as the new Sergeant At Arms, I have had the special opportunity to witness a lot of growth and change within our club, and of course its members. That, on its own, is a truly humbling thing, because, through everyone's stories and dedication to change, it has allowed me to grow, not to mention reflect on myself through shared experiences. I can't wait to see what the members bring to the table in the coming year.

This year I've been gifted with the opportunity to be on the executive body, though only for a few months since the College Debate Tournament, which was a huge success. I can't wait to see what the coming year brings to our club in 2026, where I'll get the chance to provide everyone and myself with a full-fledged year of my participation as a body member.

In this coming year and throughout the rest of my holding this position here at Capital Toastmasters, I hope to have the ability to take our club to another level. And with being appointed by the other members of Capital Toastmasters (executive body), I just want everyone to be aware of what I wish to bring to the coming year. My goals are to elaborate more on group set-ups and create an environment where our members feel safe, comfortable, and where we all are supportive of one another's goals. I do this so that everyone can succeed and benefit from this club and meet their fullest potential towards their future goals within or outside of these walls.

As for the holidays, I want to wish everyone a Happy Holiday and a Happy New Year! I hope that everyone has a memory or two that has stuck with them from this past year's events. On the off chance that you don't or haven't had one, then just wait and enjoy the coming holiday party.

Happy Holidays to everyone and their families from your Sergeant At Arms...

MEMBER

Toastmaster of the Month

Lee Hays



Congratulations to Lee Hays for being our Toastmasters of the Month for the month of October. He's always stepping up and has been helping by facilitating classes and Speech by Pass meetings, never backing out of an opportunity to put his best foot forward.

Even with a recent set-back and interruption to his programming, he hasn't slowed down or been held back. Lee is becoming an example of how this club creates leaders and credible messengers in the community.

November

Congratulations

Carl Alsup was voted best speaker at our last monthly meeting centered on the monthly theme *The Power of Appreciation*. Also at that meeting, Chris Longo was voted Best Evaluation. I know that this likely doesn't come as a surprise to our members who were present at the last meeting. Especially when it comes to Carl Alsup's speech. Congrats to the both of you!

Holiday Greetings from Oregon Cure

The bars may hold the body tight,
And the walls may block the starry night.
No gifts may come, no carols ring,
Just time that passes, slow and slow, and brings
A quiet weight to every day,
As freedom seems so far away.
But still, the heart can find its own bright gleam,
A cherished memory, a hopeful dream.
The world outside keeps spinning on its way,
With moon and stars to light the coming day.
And though the season's cheer seems far and dim,
The gift of peace resides within.
So in this time, let your own spirit soar,
Beyond the walls, and out the guarded door.
For the soul, no power can confine,
A Christmas hope, a peace, that's truly thine.
And may this truth, a comfort soft and deep,
Bring rest to you, while worldly worries sleep.
Sending all the best holiday wishes to you.

From all of us at Oregon CURE, we send you our deepest wishes for peace, comfort, and joy this holiday season. May the new year bring you strength, hope, and brighter days ahead.



Capital Toastmasters wishes all of our members and the rest of OSP, a happy holiday season and best wishes for the coming New Year. We know that this season can be a difficult one for many of us and we appreciate organizations like Oregon Cure for doing all that they do in the community, and for taking the time to wish us the best.

Highlighting this Past Year

This past year saw us hosting the Area 44 Speech Contest, with our member Stefyni winning first place in Area, then division, and finally getting second place in District. We also had Tracie Hightower, the Head of DOC Education come in and speak about *Education & Opportunity* and, not long after she came, we saw the heavy equipment certification sign-ups hit the population just as she had said.

Since Toastmasters is where leaders are made, we were excited to highlight some of the leaders from the inside and outside community during our meeting centered on *Leadership & Service*. We also got to hear who and what inspired us by demonstrating what leadership looks like. We got to sit with some of these leaders together with our friends and family at the banquet this summer where we had a Family Feud and short debate competition.

The last two big events we had this year had articles written about them. The first was our Mentorship finale, where finalists of *The Speech* Mentorship program styled after the hit series *The Voice*, competed for the top spots at our August meeting where others from inside and out spoke on the monthly theme *Transformation*. This event inspired an article that has been submitted to Toastmasters International for approval and possible inclusion.

The other was the All Day College Debate Tournament where OPB did an article that all our members received a copy of. If you are a new member and want a copy, feel free to stop by the cage and ask for one.

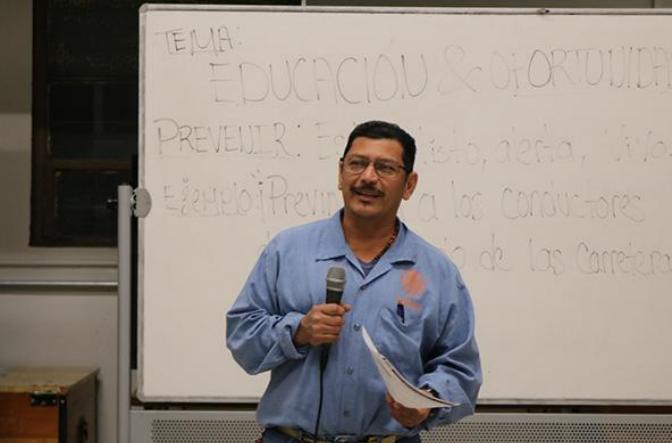
The following pages are some pictures from the last year and the events mentioned above. We had a debate collage last month, but this was a great opportunity to include some additional pictures from this exciting event that is still relatively fresh in our minds.

Let's hope that next year brings us even better opportunities to highlight our club and all of our members.

Speech Contest



Education & Opportunity



Leadership



Banquet



Transformation & Mentorship



Debate Tournament



TI Toolbox

INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Connecting Through Humor

I've recently started working in the Engaging Humor Path in Pathways, and it has reminded me just how powerful humor can be – not only onstage, but in leadership and life.

For me, humor has always been a bridge. A way to connect, to lighten the moment, and to remind people (and myself!) not to take everything so seriously. One of my favorite ways to connect is with a bit of self-deprecating humor – it's honest, it's real, and it helps people relax.

I often tell the story of why I went to my first Toastmasters meeting: to run away from my kids! That always gets a laugh. But underneath the joke is something more meaningful. I was looking for something that was mine – a space to learn and grow.

Recently, my daughter said, "Actually you weren't running away. You were running toward something." She was right. And that simple, funny story became a doorway to something much bigger.

Humor can do that – it can open doors, shift perspectives, and bring people together. It creates what I like to call universal "touchpoints" moments that remind us of what truly connects us.

At a recent District event, I saw this in action. The emcees used humor throughout – sharing how they were feeling, laughing at their own mistakes when they went off script, and keeping the audience fully engaged. The result? A room full of energy, warmth, and connection.

As Toastmasters founder Dr. Ralph C. Smedley said, "We learn best in moments of enjoyment." A little laughter can lift the mood, spark engagement, and make learning feel effortless.

Humor makes us more relatable – and that's the first step to genuine connection.

But it's also important to use humor with care. It should never divide or demean. The best kind of humor brings people together. It's kind, inclusive, and rooted in empathy.

So go ahead, tell the story, make the joke, laugh at the moment you once wanted to forget.

Because the right kind of humor doesn't distract from your message – it helps deliver it.

- Aletta Rochat, DTM
International President

2026 Calendar

2025 EVENTS

Banquet	June 11
All Day Debate	October 13
Holiday Party	December 10

2026 Meetings / Themes

January 14:	(Speech Contest) New Beginnings
February 11:	History & Culture
March 11:	Life Changing Stories
April 8:	Humor
May 13:	Mental Health
June 10:	(BANQUET) Community
July 8:	Inspiration & Creativity
August 12:	TM Skills in Daily Life
September 9:	Favorite Quotes
October 14:	Scary Topics/Hot Topics
November 11:	Giving Thanks
December 9:	(HOLIDAY PARTY) Holiday Memories

2026 Classes

To be Determined	Proposals Awaiting Approval

2026 Fundraisers

1 st Qtr	SuperBowl (Chicken & Nachos)	February 6 (Fri)
At-Cost	To be Determined	Proposals Pending
2 nd Qtr	To be Determined	Proposals Pending
3 rd Qtr	To be Determined	Proposals Pending
At-Cost	To be Determined	Proposals Pending
4 th Qtr	To be Determined	Proposals Pending

**SHOUT
OUT!!**

Shout Out to Capital Toastmaster member and Executive Clerk, Marcellus Allen II for being appointed Vice President for the Uhuru Sasa Cultural Club.

Goal Setting

A key to goal setting is accountability. Being accountable to both yourself and the reason you are setting a goal can be key. If you find that over time you have a problem building new habits or meeting milestones in your goal setting a accountability partner can be A great tool.

Find a person you trust who will keep you on track. Tell them your goal and what you're doing to accomplish that goal. Develop a plan to measure your success and identify some milestones you want to work on. Have that person write those things down in a place you both can see them daily.

Then ask them to check in with you weekly or monthly and help keep you focused. Last celebrate your success together with some form of reward for you both.

The Mission of Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening, and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs, thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

Club Mission

The mission of a Toastmasters club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every individual member has the opportunity to develop oral communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.

A Toastmasters Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise...

- To attend club meetings regularly.
- To prepare all of my speech and leadership projects to the best of my ability, basing them on projects in the Competent Communication, Advanced Communication or Competent Leadership manuals.
- To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments.
- To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations.
- To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow.
- To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so.
- To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy.
- To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmaster's membership offers.
- To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters educational and recognition programs.
- To maintain honest and highly ethical standards during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.