

District 2 Toastmasters

**Area / Division
Contest Chairman's Guide**

A Learning Tip Seminar

By

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About Bruce Meaker

Bruce Meaker has been a Toastmaster for over 27 years.

He has held every club and nearly every District Officer position including District 2 Governor in 1994-95. During this time he has started and mentored over a dozen clubs. He currently belongs to four Toastmaster clubs (home – Snohomish County, advanced – Toastmasters Extraordinaries, and specialty – Philosophically Speaking and Seattle International 10).

His other accomplishments include chairing two District conferences, District Chief Judge, Regional Conference Facilities and Finance Chairs, Toastmaster of the Year (2001), and District Historian from 1997 to 2013.

In 2007 after rising to the District level seven times, he won the District 2 Evaluation contest. He repeated this feat in 2010 to become only one of several in District 2 history to have won the Evaluation contest more than once.

As a Distinguished Toastmaster, he is a regular speaker and trainer for clubs, Toastmasters Leadership Institutes, MELEs, and District Conferences on the subjects of Club and Toastmaster skills.

He is available to speak on a variety of Toastmaster skill building and inspirational subjects, including Evaluations, Mentoring, TM of the Day, Where to Get Speech Ideas, How to Quickly Draft a Speech, Converting Guests to Members, Building Healthy Clubs, Contest Chairmanship and Judging, Speechcraft, Conducting a Successful Roast, and Toastmasters as preparation for life opportunities.

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Area-Division Contest Chairman's Guide

By

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I have learned about Toastmasters Contests through many years of experience in district leadership. Toastmasters is about “showmanship” and the contests we ask our leaders to run are a great opportunity to practice this vital skill. A “good show” helps the members who participate to grow in confidence and feel good about the growing process. These skills have helped me greatly in successfully facilitating real life events such as my mother’s 80th birthday celebration, my parent’s 60th wedding anniversary, and the retirement celebration for a manager at work. All of them required planning and organization of people and resources for the purpose of celebrating some special event or person. All based on the skills learned by putting on a club contest.

Because Toastmaster contests are public events, there will usually be non Toastmaster members of the public who will attend. Many times these will be family of the contestants. By putting on a quality well-run contest, you promote the goodwill of Toastmasters with both the participants and guests which only furthers the goals of the organization to sustain and expand its membership while offering them valuable growing experiences. This is the contest chairman’s charge as a leader.

The following list emphasizes what an Area / Division Contest Chairman has to be aware of and do before, during, and afterward to put on a “good show” ie. a successful contest.

Before the Contest

1. **The Rules.** You should read the current version of the Toastmasters International Rule book which is readily available on-line. Get it from either TI or from several districts which publish TI contest related publications and forms. From time to time TI changes the rules and you will want to be aware of the latest version so you can correctly orchestrate your contest and address any matters that come up with authority.
2. **Toastmaster.** You are the chairman of the contest and as such you are to practice getting others to fill all the roles for you. Therefore, avoid the urge to be the Toastmaster yourself and ask someone else to fill that role. If you want to be a contest Toastmaster, then make arrangements to swap with another contest chair. They toastmaster your contest, and you toastmaster theirs.

Communicate with the Toastmaster ahead of time. If they are inexperienced, be sure that person is briefed about what they are to do during the contest. The list of items should include the following:

- Arrival time to brief the contestants

- Opening statements to warm up the audience. (Usually inspirational in the spring and humorous in the fall.)
- Calling on the Chief Judge and Timer to review their roles (decide if Chief Judge or Toastmaster will call on the Timer)
- Asking the audience to refrain from leaving or entering the room while a contestant is speaking.
- Asking the audience to silence their cell phones.
- Contestant introductions for speech contests (name, title, title, name)
- Contestant introductions for evaluation and table topics contests (name, name)
- Asking Timer for one minute between contestants (two minutes at the end of each contest) for the Judges to mark their ballots
- Contestant interviews. 1 to 2 minutes each but has to be long enough to allow the Chief Judge and counters to complete their determinations of contest winners. If a contestant is in both contests, they are only interviewed after the second contest to avoid the perception of bias with the judges.
- Evaluation speaker interview. Must be long enough to allow the evaluation contestants to be sequestered, have 5 minutes for composing of notes, and the first contestant to be returned to the room. 5 minutes of interview will usually do it.
- Table Topics contest question. It can be developed either by the Chairman or the Toastmaster. The Chairman should be deliberate about clarifying who it will be.

3. **Chief Judge.**

- a. Again, resist the urge to play this role! Get someone else to do it.
- b. Confer with the Chief Judge before the contest. Discuss which of you will be bringing the contest forms. I like to have the Chief Judge bring the forms. Then I bring a set myself for backup.

4. **Judges.** Selecting quality judges is vital to the success of your contest. Toastmasters International has several rules which apply to the judging of contests. With these in mind, I offer the following:

- a. Area Contests: There should be at least 5 judges plus a Tie Breaking Judge.
- b. Division Contests: There should be at least 6 judges plus a Tie Breaking Judge.
- c. I recommend you line up more than the minimum number because life happens and people don't show up for a variety of bizzare reasons which only leave you short of the minimum number needed to conduct your contest. Recruit at least 2 more than the minimum and you are fairly safe in not having a judge shortage crisis for your contest.

- d. Judges may be solicited within the Area ie. may be a member of a contestants club. However, you need to get equal representation from all contestant clubs to avoid questions of bias.
 - e. For the Division, no judge can be a member of a contestant's club.
 - f. Therefore, I recommend that you recruit your judges from outside the Area or Division of your contest. If you do, you will accomplish two goals. First, they provide a fresh, relatively unbiased judging from those who are not familiar with the contestants. Second, you add to the attendance numbers for your contest.
 - g. Plan ahead and ask persons outside your club to come judge your contest early before their schedules get filled up. I like to get the judges recruited at least a month before the contest season starts at the club level.
5. **Location/ Venue.** The contest may be held at any number of public or private locations suitable for the needs of the contest. Considerations are:
- a. Is the location easily accessible for those that will attend?
 - b. Is there space to hold the number of attendees?
 - c. Is there a room or space to conduct the Toastmaster's briefing of the contestants and Chief Judge's briefing of the judges, counters, timers, and sgts at arms?
 - d. Is there a room outside the contest room to sequester the contestants for the Evaluation and Table Topics contests?
 - e. Is there parking available close by that does not require the attendees to pay for it?
 - f. Will the location allow you to hold an event which will last for up to 4 hours from first arrival and setup to final pickup and exit.
6. **Date and Time.**
- a. This information should be clarified well ahead of the contest to allow you to advertise and get the event on the calendars of attendees.
 - b. If there are two contestants in each contest, then the entire contest will have at least a 2-hour duration. See Contest Program / Agenda below for guidelines on determining the length of your contest given the number of contestants.
7. **Equipment.** The following is a list of equipment needed to put on a contest. Usually these items are available from a club and the chairman needs to be deliberate about checking that they may be available for the contest.
- a. Timing lights
 - b. Extension Cord (for timing lights)
 - c. Stop Watches (2)
 - d. US flag
 - e. Lectern or small table for notes
8. **Paper Forms.**

- a. Judges Forms were discussed above under Chief Judge.
- b. Contest Program / Agenda
The following are my rules of thumb for crafting an agenda that will accurately depict the flow of the contest.
 - 9 minutes / contestant - Humorous and International Speech Contest
 - 5 minutes / contestant - Evaluation Contest
 - 3 minutes / contestant – Table Topics

This allows enough time for Toastmaster introductions of contestants, contestant presentations, 1 minute of silence between contestants and 2 minutes at the end for the judges.

- 2.5 minutes / contestant for interviews
 - 6 minutes for the Evaluation Speaker interview to allow the contestants to be sequestered, have 5 minutes to compose their notes, and for the return of the first contestant.
- c. Certificates of Participation for the Toastmaster to give the contestants after the interview. These can either be printed up from a Word document or from forms available from Toastmasters International.
 - d. Certificates of Appreciation for the Chairman to give the contest supporters before announcing the contest winners. Also available using a Word document or forms from Toastmasters International.
 - e. Advertising flyer. Besides the other vital information about the contest, clearly specify the expected “Arrival Time” and “Contest Start Time”. If you just specify that the Contest will be held at 9 a.m. expecting to begin the contest then, there will be contestants and supporters that will arrive at that time and delay your contest as they sign in and then need to be briefed. Arrival time should be at least a half hour before the start time to allow for the briefings by the Toastmaster and Chief Judge. An hour is better because they need to get settled and invariably some are always late.

9. **Financing.** Area and Division Contests are expected to be self funding. Contests will cost a modest amount (\$20 to \$100). District 2 provides awards for the Area and Division contest winners. Other costs that might occur are the following:
 - a. Appreciation gifts for the Toastmaster, Chief Judge and Evaluation Speaker (spring). These people have greatly helped you put on a good show. Gifts may be a modest gift card (I suggest \$15), a potted plant, Table Topics idea cards, notebook to write ideas, etc.
 - b. printing and paper for agendas and certificates of appreciation.
 - c. refreshment food / drinks. Your network within your Area/Division of members may donate food and drinks or you may arrange to have food

purchased. Refreshments can be snacks, muffins, pizza, or a full potluck menu. It depends on the culture you inherit and/or can create for support of the contest. Drinks may include water, coffee, tea, juice and/or soda. It depends on how you want to organize this part of the contest experience and your Area/Division culture.

Financial support for contest costs can come from several sources. Once you tally the expected costs for the contest, funds can come from attendee donations or raffles. Area Directors can go to their clubs for support but I don't recommend it. It imposes an extra burden on the clubs and the attendees at the contest should be the primary source of funding if done correctly. Be creative in how you put the needs and sources together to make this event happen and be self supporting.

a. Attendee Donations

- Have a money jar or cash box at the registration table.
- Show a sign asking for "Donation \$3" (less than the price of a white chocolate moca with the whip!) Toastmasters cannot charge to attend an event but we can ask for a donation which is a voluntary gift to the organization.
- Have enough cash in the box or jar for change if someone has a large bill.

b. Raffle

- Get a roll of raffle tickets from an office supply store like Staples.
- Have several prizes which can be purchased for a modest amount or are donated by businesses (ie. Microsoft products)
- Tell attendees of the chance to buy a raffle ticket when they register
- Charge \$1 per ticket or \$5 for 7 tickets
- Talk up the raffle during the break. Selling raffle tickets is like speaking. The more enthusiastic you are the more you sell.

10. **Awards.** The District provides awards for the Area and Division contests. Medals are given out to winners of Area contests and acrylic trophies are provided for Division contests.

a. Rule of thumb for number of places:

<u>No. of Contestants</u>	<u>Places Awarded</u>
2, 4	1st, 2nd
3, 5 or more	1st, 2nd, 3rd

Try to avoid having only one person without an award. This is accomplished by awarding to all contestants or only the top two. The top two need to be awarded to make it clear who the alternate contest representative for the next contest is if the winner of this contest is unable to participate.

During the Contest

1. **Greeter.** Have someone at a table near the door who will greet and sign-in everyone who attends. The sign-in list is important for you to know how many came for future contest planning. Thus for the next contest, you will know if you need to adjust your promotion for the contest and how many funds will be needed to pay for expenses. The greeter should prompt those signing in to make a donation to support the expenses of the contest and thank them for that donation.
2. **Start on time.** Get organized to start when you have said you are going to start. It maintains your integrity if you do. It irritates everyone if you don't. Minimize the number of people arriving at the start time by advertising the registration time as one hour before the start time.
3. **Welcome / Flag Salute.** Give an enthusiastic and warm welcome to the attendees. Always conduct a flag salute to the country that allows us the right to free speech.
4. **Dignitaries.** Introduce any District dignitaries that might be present i.e. club presidents, Area/Division Directors, or Past District Governors/Directors. You can put a column on the sign in sheet which asks for their District status which allows you to read off the names and positions. However, if you have a "dignitary" who is a contestant, conduct the introductions after the contest before handing out the Certificates of Appreciation.
5. Give contestant Certificates of Participation to the Toastmaster. The contestants get them as they are interviewed. You could delegate the creation of these to another person.
6. Introduce the Toastmaster.

After the Toastmaster is done:

1. Present Certificates of Appreciation to all the contest supporters. I sometimes give out a candy bar with the Certificate of Appreciation such as a \$100,000 bar and tell them they are worth a hundred grand (which they are). Just make sure these costs are accounted for in your budgeting.
2. Recognize the Toastmaster and the Chief Judge and present them with a gift of appreciation.

3. Have the chair of the next contest come up to announce the time and date of that event.
4. Have the District representative come up to announce the District conference time and date. After they are done, have the District representative stay up on stage to help hand out the awards.
5. Announce if there were any disqualifications for time. Don't say who it was. The audience will know and understand if a very good speaker does not place and therefore, will not question the judging process. The last thing you want is for the audience (which includes family members and those new to Toastmasters) to wonder why the results came out the way they did.
6. **Announce the winners.** Do not call the contestants up to the front to announce the winners. I was in a contest many years ago with 4 contestants. We were called up to the front of the room and then the winners were announced in the order of 3rd and 2nd place. I was standing there with the other remaining person thinking that maybe I had won the contest when they announced the other person as the winner. This awkward moment left me to just sit down so the winner could bask in his glory. After that experience I recommend that the winners be announced with the contestants in the audience so as not to create an embarrassing situation which detracts from audience focus on congratulating the winner.
7. **Be Graceful.** Showmanship demands that you graciously conduct the contest in a manner which honors everyone who participates or attends. Do not call attention to mistakes or errors made by others during the contest that are inconsequential to the outcome. Many times the audience won't know if an error has been made so you serve no constructive purpose in calling attention to it. However, if a serious breach of contest protocol is occurring during the contest by an inexperienced Toastmaster or Chief Judge then it would be appropriate to call gracious attention to it to avoid a protest. Briefing the Toastmaster and conferring with the Chief Judge ahead of the contest will go along way toward avoiding such challenges.
8. **Pictures.** Arrange to have someone take pictures of the event (not during the contestant speaking) and particularly of the winners. It is part of a documenting a good show and may come in handy for future trainings on how to put on a successful contest or year end review of what you accomplished.

After the Contest

1. **Celebrate!** Have a party afterward for all who can attend at a local restaurant or pub. This allows you to develop and enjoy Toastmaster comradarie. This reinforces the positive culture of your area or division.

2. **Evaluate.** Make a list of what worked well and what did not work well for reference when conducting a contest in the future.
3. **Communicate.** Forward the names of the winners to the chairman at the next contest.
4. If you have excess funds after paying all the legitimate expenses, keep them available for support of your next contest, or give them to the District Director. These belong to Toastmasters International and therefore, no “profits” from a Toastmasters function may be kept and used personally. It puts the 501c.3 non-profit status of TI in jeopardy if you do.

Planning and executing a contest is very rewarding and these skills will give you confidence to take on projects outside Toastmasters where it counts the important life event opportunities that will come your way.

Area - Division Contest Chairman Management Plan

Contest:

Who fills this roll or is responsible for the Item

Chairman
 Toastmaster
 Chief Judge
 Judges

1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6

Timers

1
 2

Counters

1
 2

Sgt at Arms
 Greeter
 Photographer
 Location:

Equipment

Timing Lights:
 Stop Watches:
 US Flag:

Refreshments:

Coffee Maker, Tea Water Heater, Extension Cord

Coffee, Tea, Orange and Apple Juice, Muffins

Contest Program / Agenda:

Certificates of Appreciation:

Costs:

Responsible Person

Trophies
 Gifts for TM, CJ, TS
 Muffins
 Coffee, Tea, Juice
 Candy Bars (20)
 Total

Humorous Speech Contestants

Table Topics Contestants

Area 35 Clubs

Seattle International 10
Speak to Succeed
Seattle University
Freely Speaking
Top of the Hill
VM-Azing

**Area 35 Governor
Josh Hindman**

**Timers: Dan Christopher, Barbara Carlson
Counters: Adriene Miller, Jane Babione
Sgts-at-Arms: John Roberts, Geri Johnson
Registration & Program: Seattle International 10**

*We appreciate your support of this contest
with a \$3.00 donation to defray costs.*

District 2 Division C

Area 35

**International Speech
&
Evaluation Contest**

*Construct an Idea
Build a Legacy*

March 31, 2011

Glaser Auditorium
Swedish Medical Center

Area 35
International Speech
and Evaluation Contest

Agenda

- 5:30 Potluck
- 6:00 Role Briefings – Speakers and Judges
- 6:30 Contest Chairman.....**Josh Hindman**
Welcome
Flag Salute
- 6:35 Introduce Toastmaster....**MaryAllene Otis**
Opening Remarks
Review of the Rules
Chief Judge.....**Valerie Tims**
- 6:50 International Speech Contest
- Contestants: **Diann Hitzel**
George Reilly
Jean Zhou
- 7:15 Contestant Interviews

- 7:25 Break
- 7:40 Evaluation Contest
Test Speaker: **Sharon Rice**
- Contestants: **Clark Coler**
Diann Hitzel
Kevin Reinstein
Punam Verma
- 8:05 Interview Contestants
- 8:15 Introduce Contest Chairman
Introduction of Dignitaries
Announcements
Participant Certificates of Appreciation
- 8:30 Announce Winners
- 8:35 Adjourn

District 2 Toastmasters
Division A
Sign-In Sheet

	Name	Club	Office
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	Name	Club	Office
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Division A

**International Speech
and Evaluation Contest**

DONATIONS \$3

**Thank you for your support of
this contest.**

DISTRICT 2 TOASTMASTERS



Presents the

DIVISION A



HUMOROUS SPEECH AND TABLE TOPICS CONTEST

Saturday, October 18, 2003



Skagit Valley College
Mt. Vernon, WA
Lewis Building
Room L65



Arrival Time: 8:00 a.m.
Start Time: 9:00 a.m.



Contact: Bruce Meaker, DTM
425-783-1722 (w)
425-338-4574 (h)

Directions: Skagit Valley College is at College Way and Laventure in Mt. Vernon. Exit I-5 at College Way north of Mt. Vernon and head East about 1-1/2 miles. The College is on the Northeast corner with parking facilities available from Laventure and College Way. Park in the student designated parking lots at the northeast corner of College and Laventure. The Lewis Building is the first east-west structure north of College Way and east of Laventure. Room L65 can be accessed from the north side of the building.