

Ice-Breaker takes home the Blue

Last Thursday was an ordinary night at Parramatta Toastmasters; no World Champion guest speaker, no Anniversaries, no fancy dress, not even a cake or balloons—just an ordinary meeting. Ladies and gentlemen, when an ordinary meeting means three inductions (yes three), two ice-breakers (yes two), and yet another blue-ribbon ice-breaker (no this is not a joke), plus over a dozen guests, there is something special going on!

What is it about Parramatta Toastmasters that means a night like this is an ‘ordinary’ night? It’s not the décor, it’s not the coffee, it’s definitely not the Secretary’s good looks—it IS the atmosphere. It is what happens when a room full of enthusiastic and sincere people, put themselves out on a limb, share their stories and support and encourage each other.

Selvy and Suzanne gave us a tantalizing taste of what’s to come from them, with two very different but fascinating ice-breakers. Suzanne took home the blue-ribbon, despite sharing the bill with some much more experienced Toastmasters—see a transcript of her speech on Page 2—whilst Selvy became a testament to the power of Speech Craft and her tremendous efforts over those grueling six weeks.



An avalanche of Ice-Breakers—Selvy Jayaganesh and Suzanne Berkeley accept their ribbons, awarded by Sargeant At Arms, Lyndall Eager



We do solemnly swear—Nirish Shakya, Steven Cox and Mike Stein raising their right-hands (figuratively) and throwing their hats in the Toastmaster ring.

Natta Photos by *Suben Subenthiran*

Triple-induction puts Distinguished Club across the line

It’s not every week that we have an induction, it’s rare that we have a double, but boy-oh-boy, bring out the hen’s teeth?! Last meeting saw a triple-induction, and what a trio for us to be welcoming into the club. First on the bill was Stephen Berkeley, son of recent inductee Suzanne Berkeley and himself a recent Speechcraft graduate; second was Nirish Shakya another enthusiastic and well-accomplished Speech-craft graduate; and thirdly we inducted Mike Stein, a long-time Toastmaster who has come to use from St Claire Toastmasters.

Not to take attention away from the induction of these three promising new Toastmasters, but this induction means that we have completed the last of our Distinguished Club Program goals for the year.

Gentlemen, a hearty welcome—and we look forward to watching your development.

DON'T MISS!

- **The Western Division Humorous and Table Topics Contests—Sunday 24 October**
See the [flyer](#) for details!

Who am I?

Suzanne Berkeley

(a transcript of her winning Ice Breaker)

The question “where are you from?” always makes me a bit puzzled; especially when it is extended like

“Where are you from? South Africa?”

or

“Where are you from? You have an English Accent?”

That question has also come in a different form: ie

“When did you leave South Africa?”

Mr. Toastmaster, fellow members: The secret that I will reveal to you, is; I am not from England, and I have never been to South Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I was born on a tiny island located towards the southern end of the chain of islands between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The Island has an area of 344 Sq Km. The climate is tropical and the terrain is volcanic. The economy is dependent mainly on tourism and agriculture. The population is presently under 100,000; 82% of which are Negroes, 13% mixed, with the remaining 5% being of European or East Indian descent.

The Island was inhabited by an indigenous race before Columbus, a Spanish explorer, lost his way on a trip to India in 1492, and slipped into that region. It remained uncolonised for a while before the French moved in during the 17th Century. In the process of colonisation, the natives were wiped out. The Europeans then turned to Africa, from where they transported slaves to establish and work on Sugar cane plantations. From the 17th to 19th centuries, the French, Spanish and British fought each other for the control of this and other islands of the region. And so the governance of the island changed several times in that period.

Inevitably, there was later some degree of mixing between the ex-slaves and their masters. Hence the 13% mixed population today.

I attended primary and secondary school on the island. Each of my schools had about 300 pupils. They were large schools, or so I thought.

I was a quiet student who always liked singing and was quite deflated in year 3 when I was not picked for the choir, because the teacher, Mrs Kepple, said that my voice was too soft. Imagine my disappointment when I arrived at high school three years later to find that Mrs Kepple was my English teacher.

Apart from that disappointment, high school was quite enjoyable.

At the age of 22, I moved away to attend university. After completing my Bachelors of Science, I moved to the US, where I worked and completed further studies. I also gave birth to a son in 1989. The following year, I visited Australia to introduce him to relatives who had already migrated here. Before that visit, I had little knowledge of, or interest in Australia. However, I was

pleasantly surprised by the natural beauty and pleasant climate of this country, compared to New York in December. I subsequently migrated in 1992.

Fellow toastmasters, now that you know the secret, if you ever get asked the question about me, “Where is she from?” you can now say with confidence:

“She is from Parramatta - A Grenadian, American, Australian, of African EUROPEAN descent”

This Commonwealth!

Parramatta taps the leadership well

Robyn Peck / Ferdie Oosterhoff

Members will have noticed the increased focus on the Toastmaster Leadership ‘stream’ in recent months, and the push to have members continue to work at their Competent Leadership manuals. There has in fact been a new role invented to support the push, namely the *CL Evaluator*, whose role it is to evaluate the manual roles that people perform, and generally encourage this activity. With this in mind, it seemed a good time to publish some great advice compiled by Robyn Peck...

If you want to be a leader who attracts quality people, the key is to become a person of quality yourself. Leadership is the ability to attract someone to the gifts, skills, and opportunities you offer as an owner, as a manager, an executive member of your club, or as a
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Start a revolution, lead your people to the promised land, invade foreign lands—it's all possible with the Competent Leader manual

parent. Think of leadership as the “great challenge of life”.

What is important in leadership is refining your skills. All great leaders keep working on themselves until they become effective. Here are some specifics:

Learn to be strong but not rude. It is an extra step you must take to become a powerful, capable leader with a wide range of reach. Some people mistake rudeness for strength. Remember, it's not even a good substitute.

Learn to be kind but not weak. We must not mistake kindness for weakness. Kindness isn't weak. Kindness is a certain type of strength. We must be kind enough to tell somebody the truth. We must be kind enough and considerate enough to lay it on the line. We must be kind enough to tell it like it is and not deal in delusion.

Learn to be bold but not a bully. It takes boldness to win the day. To build your influence, you've got to walk in front of your group. You've got to be willing to take the first arrow, tackle the

first problem, discover the first sign of trouble.

Be proud but not arrogant. It takes pride to win the day. It takes pride to build your ambition. But the key to becoming a good leader is being proud without being arrogant.

In leadership, it's okay to be witty, but not silly. It's important to have fun, but not be foolish. We must learn to deal in realities and truth. Accept life as it is – unique. The fundamental skills of leadership can be adapted by anyone who is willing to have a go.

Parramatta Toastmasters - Club 2274

Meeting Details

Parramatta Toastmasters meet fortnightly on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month, in the Linden Room of the Parramatta RSL.

6pm for a 6:30pm start

Dinner is available during the meeting
Guests and visitors are always welcome

Enquiries / Correspondence

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Speechcraft Spot

Do you suffer from human-kind's most common fear?

Public speaking is a fear held by many people. For some it is a mild discomfort, while others break out in a cold sweat at the mere thought of standing in front of an audience!

If you have decided it's high time to break free of the powerful fear of public speaking, Toastmasters may be an excellent place to get the knowledge and practice that will allow you to speak both confidently and competently in public.

Looking to advance yourself professionally or personally?

Public speaking is both a skill and an art form. Whether you are a novice speaker or a seasoned presenter, there is always something you can do to improve your skills.

Toastmasters can show you new ways to invigorate your existing presentation style; to put that sales pitch over the top, help you nail that job interview, or make your daughter's wedding toast worthy of the tears and applause!

Do you enjoy sharing ideas and meeting new people?

Toastmasters may be the club you've always been searching for. Toastmasters are people from all walks of life, nationalities and professions who are working to better share their ideas with others.

Each meeting provides an opportunity for a wide range of perspectives on any number of topics, and give/receive positive, constructive feedback on how those ideas were expressed.

Start the ball rolling - come to a meeting or enroll in a Speechcraft course!
Enquiries at speechcraft@parramattatm.org.au