

Red carpet on fire in Parramatta

It's been an exciting few months, first the Golden Globes, then the Razzies, then the mighty Hollywood Oscars, but it was all just a warm-up really...for the Parramatta Toastmasters Oscars. Had you been at Parramatta RSL last Thursday night you would have been part of this years most star-studded event. Of course when thousands of people want to attend, and the premises can accommodate sixty there will always be some disappointed people—next year the event should probably be televised.

Tribute must be paid to the magician who worked behind the scenes to make this special event that it was—Linda Snalam and her team did a fantastic job.

Those who came in the door were greeted by a 6-foot Oscar—the hall was beautifully decorated and beamed with professionally designed Hollywood lighting, all serving as the perfect backdrop for the breathtaking beauty and fashion that was on display—a Goldie Hawn, a Marilyn Monroe, an Anjelica Houston and a handful of Audrey Hepburns—it was difficult to pick the most stunning in that bunch.

The evenings activities were run expertly by our very own Artistic Director Sam Ekinci—great language, smooth transitions and appropriate dialog are proving to be the hallmarks of this ever-improving Toastmaster.

One of the evenings highlights was the Gary's talk about Parramatta's very own Oscar—a trophy donated by Newcastle club in the days before the Distinguished Club Program, that earned in the nickname Oscar.

The Hollywood inspired Table Topics run by Lyndall were another highlight, with a great premise, and much in-character hilarity.

Perhaps the piece de resistance of the evening was Marilyn Monroe's (a.k.a Wendy Nielsen) rendition of Happy Birthday King George—royalty (read as Ian Lipski) will never be the same again!

Special mention of must also be made of the antics of Waldorf and Statler—Kirsten and Kate Linklater did a remarkably convincing job of playing these two aging Muppets!

And then of course the speeches. With a heavy focus on the life and times of a number of movie stars, the Oscars and Hollywood theme was well and truly brought home.

Barbara spoke about Goldie Hawn, Peter Steinhour brought us closer to Russell Crowe (a dangerous place to be), Linda spoke of her heroine Meryl Streep, and of course Marilyn Munroe (Wendy Nielsen) told us of her own life as a child in a great 'first-person' rendition, which meant the evening was topped-off with some real acting! Wendy took home both the Best Speaker and Best Table Topic awards for the evening—all in all the evening it was a fantastic

Seems a long time ago...

...but since the last Natta was published there have in fact been two meetings. The Oscars night last Thursday, but of course one week before that was meeting #1174—A Hero's Tale. It was a great evening with a high level of energy and heroic tales. We heard some top class speeches on the evening with Steven
Continued on page 2...



Under the lights—long time star Gary Wilson telling the story of Parramatta's own Oscar, supported by the glitziest Sergeant At Arms in town, Lyndal Eager.

A lifetime of Achievement

Last Thursday night also saw a very special award—John Taylor has been a very long-standing member of Parramatta Toastmasters—he has served in many roles at both local, area and district level and it's fair to say has been a powerful force in the development of the organization in our area of the last few decades.

On the basis of his contribution over these many years, John was awarded a Lifetime Achievement award at last Thursday's meeting, to great admiration and appreciation of his fellow Parramatta members. Thank you again for you contribution John, and we hope you will continue your good work.



A lifetime of involvement and giving—longstanding member John Taylor receiving his lifetime achievement award, with good friend Elizabeth Wilson and President David Griffiths

Blast from the past

Sydney Morning Herald
Wednesday January 8, 2003

Mark Ragg

This article appeared online at the Sydney Morning Herald

They come, they speak, they listen, they clap - and they've been doing it somewhere in the world for 70 years. Mark Ragg joins the Toastmasters.

At precisely 6.30pm, the gavel of authority raps the table twice. Twenty men and seven women, 18 to ageing, sit at a horseshoe table, under a dozen drifting pastel balloons and a stationary silver disco ball, and turn to the sergeant-at-arms, Michael Said, a contract manager with Shell. He speaks. The 27 clap. The 972nd meeting of the Parramatta Toastmasters Club is under way.

The president, Demian Coorey, opens the meeting. Tonight is about celebrating, he says - celebrating the extraordinary dedication of Clarrie Burton, a toastmaster for 20 years. Coorey is proud of Burton, company secretary of Sony Australia, and he's proud of the toastmasters.

You can see it in the way he bounces, leaning forward, hands waving, eyebrows dancing, eyes finding eyes. This club is all about learning to speak in public, showing confidence, exuding enthusiasm, and Coorey has got it down pat, especially the enthusiasm. The 27 clap again.

A few formalities follow, minutes and so on. Then comes the main fun: impromptu one-minute talks on the topic of the night - in this case, anniversaries. Colin Levingston, an electrical inspector, leans over his timekeeper's box, ready to flash lights in traffic hues as warnings, then buzz transgressions. The newer members quiver.

But they do it easily. May Wong, a school librarian, says she'd prefer electronic Valentine's cards to both handwritten and printed ones, to save paper, then 'fesses up it doesn't matter because she doesn't get any, anyway.

Handed the topic of Oktoberfest, storyteller and retired jack-of-all-trades Tom Ware detours via his prostate and concludes that beer is a wonder, but only when you're young.

Mary Bagaric, a business development manager, says her father, born in what is now Croatia, managed to delay national service as his birthday was never registered. Her parents still fight over the date.

Gary Wilson, a retired national service manager with Sony, recounts his worst New Year's Eve ever - hosting a bridge party, cleaning up till 3, then scoring two speeding tickets going home.

The speakers are quick and bright. Somewithnervesgotoofast. Others pause ... for effect. There are a few you wouldn't want at your wedding, but most would out-MC Uncle Joe, blindfolded.

All this is part of a bigger picture, a picture painted by one Ralph C. Smedley early last century. The young American was working as an educational director for the YMCA in Illinois, when he first tried to set up a club to teach young men public speaking. For two decades he moved around the country for the Y, setting up clubs, watching them fail.

Finally one took root, in California, of course; it spread and Toastmasters International was founded in 1932. The Parramatta branch, possibly the state's biggest, started in 1966 and allowed women to join in 1990. That's 88 years after women got the vote federally.



Just some of the glamour that was on show last Thursday night—
Kirisha, Linda and Linda.

Toastmasters now extends to 70 countries and 8600 clubs, with 500 across this odd-shaped land. About 4 million members have passed through its doors, staying an average of two years. They pass set tasks, as in Brownies or Scouts, except it's "Work with Words" and "Visual Variety", not knots and cooking. Then, mostly, they move on. A few, like Clarrie Burton and Gary Wilson, stay. Toastmasters International boasts such former members as actor Tim Allen. Billie Jean King is a toastmaster. There are more politicians than you can hide from. There are a Miss America, a gymnast, a pair of astronauts and the former Dow Chemical CEO, the unfortunately named Mr Orefice.

The night goes on, with seven-minute talks on topics such as immigration and creativity, then more talks, and more.

A big part of Toastmasters' success, as proclaimed by members shining with new confidence, is the evaluation. Everything - president's welcome, vice-president's agenda reading, chairman's running of the formal business part of the meeting - is evaluated. Even the evaluations.

Toastmasters want hand gestures, body movement, humour, timeliness, mood, presence, clarity, voice modulation, enjoyment, poise, eye contact and a professional approach. They're hard markers, but positive. They applaud the evaluations.

People join for two reasons, Coorey says. They need it for business. He's a nuclear physicist turned self-employed writer, illustrator and publisher of instruction manuals for furniture, so he needed training in talking to others and selling himself.

The other reason is for personal confidence. These people, acknowledging their shyness, are willing to confront it rather than hide behind it.

Of half the speakers there, it can be said - and is - "he/she couldn't get a word out when they started".

It must pay off.

...from page 1—Seems a long time ago

Cox's 'instructional' tale of how he put together an event to remember—Barbara's hilarious tales from the life of a wedding celebrant—and Kirsten's 'address to ambulance staff regarding the new rostering system, well delivered, and it was good to see she was really taking something away from the session to help prepare her.

The evening was marred by a touch of sadness, with Raj Velu informing us that he was moving interstate for a new work opportunity, and that we wouldn't be seeing him for a while. Raj came out of Speechcraft over a year ago with great enthusiasm, and we have watched him develop over this time. He's been a great member of the club and we will miss him. Good luck Raj, and come visit when you're in town!

Member Remember #4

From the VPE's desk

PRE-MEETINGS

The requirements for each member pre-meeting is:

- It is up to each member to arrive for a club meeting no later than 6.20pm to register, book their meals, prepare for their assignments and assist with visitor welcomes etc. If for an unforeseen emergency the member is running late, a courtesy phone call is desirable, at the earliest opportunity or prior to the start of the meeting. Members will need to identify the value of their own educational commitments and discuss their options with the VPE if he/she is going to be running late frequently to meetings.
- The Agendas are generally posted on the club website 2 to 3 meetings ahead. Members are given plenty of notice and a phone call to confirm their speech date. It is up to the member to ensure they have submitted their forward apologies prior to the program being uploaded to the web page. The member should take the appropriate steps to prepare for their allocated assignment and/or speeches. Cancellations due to lack of preparation from the speaker will place him/her at back of the speaking roster (with a large membership this could mean a lengthy wait)
- It is up to each member to organise themselves so that the same level of commitment is given to their educational development as for work, social or sporting commitments. *It is not the job of the VPE or the executive to manage "YOU". If your priorities change please speak to your VPE to review your Toastmaster workload. Short notice cancellations create unnecessary challenges for the team and should be avoided where practicable.*



CLUB MEETINGS

- Members will need to work towards meeting the Assignment and/or Speech objectives.
- Keep the assignment and speaking roles to the times allocated.
- All members to bring their CC, CL and Advanced Manuals to each meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the member at each meeting to hand his/her CL Manual to the CL Evaluator when performing an assignment
- which is subject to written Evaluation.

POST MEETINGS

- Mentors to provide guidance and advice re Mentee assignment.
- CC, CL and Advanced Manuals to be signed off by respective Evaluators.
- Take the opportunity to network with other Toastmasters and guests.

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

Snail-mail: PO Box 623 PARRAMATTA NSW 2124 Australia

Email: info@parramattatm.org.au