



PARRA NAJJA

Parramatta Toastmasters Club No 2274, Area 13, Western Division, Dist.70

Meeting number:
1299

Theme
*Upside down cake or
downside up ?*

September 17, 2015

Guest List

Sue Deaves.
Andrew Emerson.
Jaiganesh Vaidhi.
Hadi Chaoak.
Sri Harsha Rani.
Rahul Verma.
Manmeet Ahuja

Best Table Topics

Monique Tonna

Best Speaker

Gary Wilson

Best Evaluator

Alicia Dennis

Parramatta Toastmasters Turns 49

Just one short of 50 as we celebrated the anniversary meeting in the true spirit of the theme of Upside down cake or downside up. Everything was upside down right from the meeting agenda, to each of our table topic answers thanks to a carefully planned set of questions by the table topics master of the night Ron Marriott.

Its always great to attend an anniversary meeting, but this one was even yummier by the amazing friands baked by Karl Pereira and the yummy chocolate cake by Monique.

Since the agenda was upside down we started off with a laugh by the laugh master who was Michael Said We had four excellent speeches.

Gary Wilson gave the winning speech of the night about the past anniversary celebrations of the club. If you missed the last meeting this is going to be something that you will certainly regret. He brought several past anniversary agendas and placements to support his speech and those are definitely not things you get to see every day. As tradition all the past presidents cut the cake and there were 9 of them present at the meeting.

Did you know

39th Anniversary was the 1000th meeting of the club. And each member gave a speech.

30th Anniversary made record by having 44 members present at the meeting

25th Anniversary was the first time women were admitted

10th Anniversary Had the first woman guest speaker – Elizabeth Wilson.



The Stirrer's spoon

It is a wooden spoon that is awarded like a trophy and often fought for in the club. It is the Chairman 2's prerogative to award the wooden spoon to the person who gave him the most trouble during the business session. In reality it is to be awarded to the person who kept the meeting most alive and Ron Marriott, Gary Wilson, Michael said and Tom woods are all regular contender's for the spoon. This week **Sue Deaves** beat them all to it. This is probably the first time in history that a visitor has won the stirrer's spoon.



Sue Deaves with the stirrer's spoon

Quotable quotes

General Evaluator Michael Fong certainly had some quote worthy quotes last meeting with his insight.

To Michael said on his story about Ian Chick who was absent last meeting “*If you going to make fun of a member at least give them a fair chance to fight back*”

To Alicia Denis on her winning Evaluation of Kim Gosper's speech.

“*Alicia is like a ninja , taking his speech, cutting it up and laying it down for him* “

Presidents distinguished club Award.

When Parramatta Toastmasters club claims to be the best toastmaster's club its not just words on a website. We work hard for it and earn rewards to show off what we have achieved. The Distinguished Club Program (also known as the “DCP”) is a set of goals developed by Toastmasters International that helps clubs in achieving education, membership and administrative objectives. There are 10 goals in the DCP .**President's Distinguished Club** is the highest level of recognition available. A club needs to meet the membership prerequisite and achieve at least nine of the 10 goals to win it. We archived all the 10 goals. What's more this is the 16th time we have won the award in a row. That is a record in itself.



Present president Monique Tonna and Past president Ian Lipsky

***Monique Tonna* on her experiences and challenges of being the annual conference chairman**



Lessons learnt from a “L” plate leader

When I took on the role of Annual Conference Chairman, what came to mind was room planning, food tastings, choosing lovely colours for events and all the “girly” fun things you’d expect from managing an event.

Don’t get me wrong, all of that happened and was as entertaining as I thought it would be, but it didn’t give me the buzz and exhilaration that kept me going through the 48 hours of Conference mayhem from Friday 15th May to Sunday 17th May. What did was an amazing team supporting me and 400+ toastmasters who were just as excited about the event that I was.

Here are 3 lessons I learnt about leadership during the experience, and why any Toastmaster should put up their hands to try something new:

Lesson 3 – Leadership isn’t doing everything yourself, but is about empowering others.

I have always struggled with the art of delegation, and generally find it much easier to do everything myself then ask someone for help. Leading the conference committee didn’t make this any easier – what did was having mentors who would question why I was doing something instead of the team member whose portfolio the task fell in. I realised that by me doing the task, I was taking away an opportunity for someone else to learn. When planning the conference, I started off being involved in every conversation my team members had with BDSC. It was eventually pointed out that I didn’t need to be as involved as I was in the process of choosing meals and table settings, and to trust my team members that everything would be set up as we had discussed at committee meetings.

Lesson 2 – Mentors are crucial.

Specifically, mentors who are willing to be completely honest and hold you accountable for your leadership and decision making. You may not like what they have to say, and you may not follow the advice given, but it will help you question and expand your thought process to ultimately lead you to a decision that you are comfortable with and will continue to be happy with in 1 week, 1 month, or 1 years’ time.

The wrist bands were a contentious issue for some at the conference this year. Do I regret them??? Absolutely not. Are there ways that I would use them differently if given another chance??? Absolutely, but 2 months later I still look at my wristband with fond memories and would not replace it with a lanyard for anything!

Lesson 1 – People don’t remember what went right or wrong, but they will remember how you handled it.

In the work environment, I’ve been in situations where as a manager, I may not have handled situations in the most appropriate manner and I’ve witnessed other managers not handle situations appropriately either. The details of these situations are hazy, but the memory of the reaction of people involved isn’t.

Stress, upsets and differences of opinion happen – but how you handle these emotions will ultimately dictate the type of leader you are. A smile and a friendly word is free, and whilst it may not resolve the situation you are in, it will make everyone feel more at ease and calm which will generally lead to a more pleasant outcome.

Many more lessons were learnt from the experience, and I’m becoming more aware of the differences between managing a team, and leading a team. For me, being President of Parramatta Toastmasters is my opportunity to be a “P” plate leader, to continue building on the skills I’ve learnt so far and learn some new ones along the way. Sometimes taking a chance may seem scary or intimidating – entering a contest, stepping up into a new role at work, or skydiving – but no matter the outcome, the lessons & values we learn from the experience will always make that leap of faith worth it in the long run!

Gary Wilson's poem as VPE on the 5th Anniversary of the club

Our club

**When we were one,
we had just begun.**

**When we were two,
we were still very new.**

**When we were three,
we could only just see.**

**That when we were four,
We had to learn much more.
But now we are five,
We have come alive.**

**For our members have become as clever as clever,
So they'll ensure that our club will go on for ever and ever.**



Mark your Calendars

29 September – Skill builder workshop at Rowland Hassall school from 6.30pm to 8.30pm

1 October – 'Steps to a healthier you'. Next Meeting

7 October – Speaker & Evaluation (7pm till 9pm) Opportunity to present a manual speech, evaluate a speaker, on this night for Speakers and Evaluators at Rowland Hassall school.

10 October – Area 13 Table Topic and Humorous Speech Contest . Support Monique as she represents our club in both the contests and Wendy Lipski in the Table topics contest.