

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

ISSUE 10 | MAY 2023

**THE ART OF
STORYTELLING:
TIPS TO
CAPTIVATE
AND IMPACT**

TOASTMASTERS
AND MENTAL
HEALTH

2023/2024
ELECTED DISTRICT
LEADERS

THUNDERCON

**MEMBERSHIP
RETENTION
STRATEGIES**



**24
PAGES**

IAN BRATT D74 INTERNATIONAL SPEECH CHAMPION



CONTENTS

01

EDITORIAL

Note from the Managing Editor

From the District Directors Desk

02

LEADERSHIP

No, I in TEAM With Fadziso Blaine Mango

Leadership Moment - Sikhanyisile Mabhena

Time Ticking

Membership Retention Strategies

2023/2024 International Speech Contest District Champion- Ian Bratt

2023/2024 Evaluation Champion District Champion: Laurens Boel

Leading Women Series - DHANU RAJWANI

2023/2024 Elected District Directors

Membership Building Ideas- Part 2

03

EDUCATION

Pathways - Focus on The Positive

Glossophobia

Mentorship The Greatest Gift: Villene Venter

The Art of Storytelling: Tips to Captivate And Impact

Kobie Lottering Out of The Comfort Zone

The Dos and Don'ts of Speech Evaluation

Member Moment: Vashuda Degnarain

Toastmasters And Mental Health: Developing Strong Communication Skills to Improve Well-Being

Member Moment with Nonofho Kgotlaetsho

04

EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Power Communication Toastmasters Club and Financial Toastmasters Club

Thundercon: Arrival and Day One

Thundercon: Day Two

EDITORIAL

MAGAZINE EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-in-Chief
Bhekisisa Ngimane
Editor Education
Edith Utete
Rudo Masango
Contributing Editor
Martha Mpakula
Wame Namponya
Layout & Design
Tshegofatso
Tshilowa

Managing Editor
Leya Musunga
Editor
Leadership
Tsungai Manyeza
Sarah Jane Ip
Kwong
Noma Muzunze
Proofreader
Editor
Michael Shackleton,
DTM

CONTACT THE EDITOR TO FEATURE YOUR STORY

Reach us on email: excellence@toastmaster74.org

TOASTMASTERS SOUTHERN AFRICA EXECUTIVE

District Director
Andrew Tsuro' DTM
Program Quality Director
Angie Kivido
Club Growth Directors
Be Botha, DTM &
Zivai Matondo, DTM
Public Relations Manager
Bhekisisa Ngomane, DTM
Administration Manager
Vuyisile Vuthela, DTM

Finance Manager
Keamogetswe Molebalwa, DTM
Logistics Manager
Tebogo Ramaahlo, DTM
Past District Director
Njabulo Thela

TOASTMASTERS CORE VALUES

Integrity
Respect

Service
Excellence

CONTACT

www.toastmasters74.org



NOTE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

“ I was exposed to the world that is Toastmasters and the many leadership opportunities that are available ”

Time really flies; it's amazing that we are on our penultimate edition. When I joined Toastmasters just over two years ago, I thought my home Club was all that there was to Toastmasters. Then when Clubs went online, I was exposed to the world that is Toastmasters and the many leadership opportunities that are available. I slowly learnt that this is a safe place where one can grow and learn.

This month, I finally had the opportunity to attend the in-person conference - Thundercon - in Victoria Falls, and herein was another learner opportunity. Being able to meet people face-to-face after interacting online was amazing. Toastmasters are just as friendly in person as we find them online. The energy and excitement of having Toastmasters in the same room from the various countries in Southern Africa is something that each person should strive to experience.

New leaders for the District have now been elected, and as Clubs' ExCo teams start preparing to hand over the reins, ask yourself, have you raised your hand to serve? Just know this will be yet another great opportunity for you to grow as a leader.

We hope that this edition will inspire, encourage and motivate you as you continue to pursue your goals. District 74 has also crowned the new champions of the District and we are pleased to share their stories in this edition with you. Enjoy!

Leya Musunga

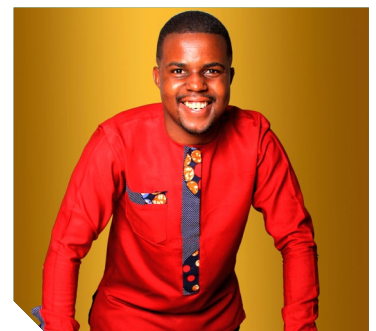
FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S DESK

What Are You Missing?

Last weekend, I took a special friend of mine to the Toastmasters conference, #ThunderCon in the city of the mighty Victoria Falls! She was mesmerized from arrival to the end of the conference! After every interval, she would remark along the lines of, "Wow, you guys do this often?" and there I was explaining how it all goes.

Let me tell you: This special friend of mine had joined Toastmasters some years back before she had to emigrate temporarily. When she returned, she reinstated her membership, but her participation was intermittent. After witnessing what she was missing out on, I have no doubt she will think thrice before missing a meeting, going forward. She discovered what she was missing. What will it take for you to find what you are missing from your Toastmasters experience?

Now, the peak of her awe was during the District Council meeting while electing our new leadership. Right in the middle of the meeting, she sends me a text, "Why



are all these incredible people running for one office, Club Growth Director? What am I missing?" I couldn't come up with a comprehensive response, other than telling her that, "They are all determined to serve and change the status quo of leadership in our continent." For me too, at that point, I realized how privileged we are to have such fine leaders raising their hands to serve. Congratulations to all that were elected and a special note to all the candidates that were not elected; thank you for your dedication to the organization.

We are now going into Club Officer elections, if you have not yet raised your hand to serve, what are you missing?

Let us help you find it.

Andrew Tsuro, DTM

LEADERSHIP

2023/2024 EVALUATION

DISTRICT CHAMPION:

LAURENS BOEL

At the recently held District 74 International Speech Contest Finals, Laurens Boel was crowned the D74 champion in the Evaluation Contest. A Toastmaster for the past ten years, Laurens started his journey with the 4th Dimension Toastmasters Club in Bryanston, Johannesburg and is currently a member of ToastED in Cape Town. Laurens is currently working as an Information Security Analyst for a financial services company and is also a property investor and coach.

1. Tell us a bit more about yourself?

I am a passionate communicator and I love to engage with people on a personal and professional level. Outside of my passion for speaking, I enjoy writing, playing music, spending time with my family, yoga and playing tennis. Most people don't know that I'm a published author and that I meditate daily.

2. Any key highlights from your Contest journey you'd like to share?

One of the key highlights of my Contest journey was when I won the Club-level Evaluation Contest. My Club members have been very supportive and gave me the confidence to compete at the

Area and District levels. I also learnt a lot from observing other contestants and their techniques, which helped me improve my own skills.

3. What help did you get along the way to assist you to achieve your goal?

I received a lot of help from my fellow Toastmasters, who provided feedback on my evaluations and encouraged me to keep pushing.

4. Did you face any challenges along the way?

Yes, I faced some challenges along the way. Like most people, I had a fear of public speaking. I dreaded standing on stage and addressing an audience. However, with practice and a supportive environment, I was able to improve.

5. What valuable lesson have you learnt during this process?

One valuable lesson I learnt during this process is the importance of active listening and empathy. As an evaluator, it's crucial to put yourself in the speaker's shoes and provide constructive feedback that will help them improve.

6. What motivates you to keep going?



What motivates me to keep going is the opportunity to grow and develop as a communicator and leader. I love the challenge of competing in Contests and pushing myself to become better.

Leya Musunga

MEMBERSHIP BUILDING IDEAS (PART 2)

This month we continue with the membership building ideas that our club Growth Directors, Zivai Matondo, DTM, started at the beginning of the year. Hope the number 31 to 60 will give you some inspiration:

30. Have a Club Web page

31. Use email to send out invites to every meeting to past guests

32. Put posters in stores

33. Ask corporations and employers to sponsor or subsidise membership

34. Have a reward program for those who bring in new members

35. Create more fun

36. Have a variety of snacks at your in person meetings

37. Invite the media

38. Use word of mouth

39. Network with coworkers, friends and family

40. Follow up with guests (personal note, telephone, email as last resort --- make it personal)

41. Have educational meetings

42. Have friendly meetings

43. Lead by example

44. Network with coworkers, friends and family

45. Follow up with guests (personal note, telephone, email as last resort --- make it personal)

46. Have incentives for those who join

47. Members give talks at other organisations (ask if can bring brochures)

48. Provide guests with free meals (don't charge them the cover charge for attending your meeting)

49. Corporate clubs provide brochure in new employee packets

50. Display trophies and ribbons

51. Lure passersby with free food (for those holding in person meetings)

52. Advertise with a blimp at sports events

53. Ask the District for help

54. If you're the boss, facilitate for your employees join

55. Hold joint meetings with non-Toastmasters groups

56. Share your Toastmasters experiences with others

57. Participate in community events

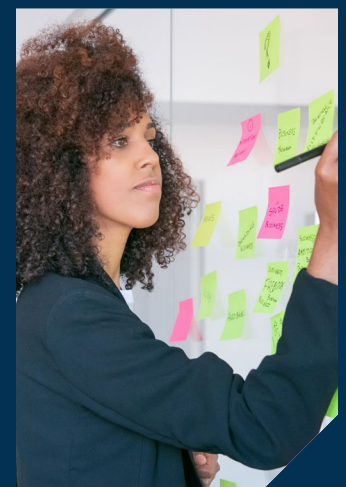
58. Write letters to community

groups

59. Be active in Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, etc.

60. Publicize club successes, elections, contests, etc. in local newspapers

Leya Musunga



LEADERSHIP MOMENT: SIKHANYISILE MABHENA

Who is Division Director Sikhanyisile Mabhena?

I am an administration manager by profession with business interests in cattle ranching and jewellery making. I was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and I currently reside there. I am the last born of three sisters and I have four nephews. In my free time, I enjoy playing social tennis and golf, which are great ways to relax and stay active.

How many years have you been a Toastmaster and what leadership positions have you taken up since you joined?

I have been a Toastmaster for four years and I raised my hand for leadership roles from the onset. In my first year, I was Vice President of Education at Supreme Toastmasters Club in Zimbabwe and became the Club President in my second year. In my third year, I went beyond borders to take up the Area Director role in Division S which covers clubs in Johannesburg, South Africa. Now in my fourth year, I am the Sergeant-at-Arms at Sell the Sizzle Club - which is an online club - (as a dual member) while concurrently serving as the Division Director for Division S in Southern Africa. This is a huge responsibility, but also a great opportunity for networking and cross pollination of ideas.

You were first the Area Director of Division S and now you are the Division Director. What lessons have you drawn from that experience, particularly being in Zimbabwe yet leading Clubs in South Africa?

I cannot even begin to tell you what a character building and, indeed, a life changing experience this has been! Not only did I take on the leadership roles but, thanks to technology, I was able to serve them remotely using virtual platforms. I had to move out of my comfort zone and engage with an unfamiliar Area and Division which has

stretched my interpersonal skills and given me an opportunity to interact with Toastmasters from diverse backgrounds.

What advice would you give to leaders who are vying for leadership positions in District 74?

I would encourage leaders to apply for whichever role they desire without limiting themselves. The key to uncapped growth is to dare to dream. Every year, Toastmasters has a host of leadership roles for us to apply for. It is up to us to identify what interests us, raise our hands to serve, then trust the application process. It does require a willingness to take on challenges and proactively seek out opportunities to make a positive impact.

Should Toastmasters stick to their home Areas or explore?

We all have unique paths, nothing is cast in stone. Thanks to technology, distance is no longer a barrier. From my experience, opportunities present themselves to those who avail themselves so leaders should pursue opportunities that are in line with their growth objectives and their why.

What has been

your highlight in Toastmasters this year?

I am particularly proud that in this Toastmasters year I was also accredited as a Toastmasters Leadership Institute Trainer. This has not just been another feather in my cap, but I have already had the opportunity to train Club Officers online and in person.

Any final words?

Yes! What Audrey Hepburn said is so true, “As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands: one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.” Secondly, we should not wait to be invited to tables. With the skills we learn in Toastmasters we can have the confidence and courage to create our own. Just engage wholeheartedly in the curriculum and leadership roles.

Noma Muzunze



“The key to uncapped growth is to dare to dream.”



TIME IS TICKING

We have about 1- 2 months left before the new Executive members take the reins of the Club and new executive members take up Division and District roles. It is the period where Clubs are already on Distinguished, Select Distinguished or even President Distinguished status. Some Clubs are still struggling to meet the Distinguished criteria

How do you reach the Distinguished level during this time?

If you already have new members, try to bring them to the next level. If there are some dormant or inactive members, try to bring them back by encouraging them to present a speech. Many new members are willing to present a speech, however, they might still be afraid to do so. One of the solutions available is visiting other Clubs and giving a speech, doing a speech marathon, or hybrid speeches in a Club to accommodate everyone.

If you are struggling to get new members, have an Open House Event. This can be done as one Club or as a number of Clubs combined.

The most DCP points are on meeting educational goals. Motivate people. Even if you are exhausted from work, social, family life, lead by example and put in a speech. You can only compete with yourself. Take your goal higher. Make it a legacy for your Club

Sarah- Jane Ip Kwong

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION STRATEGIES

Member retention: It's always on our minds, this year more than ever. When your members face any competing demands for time, attention, and money, how do you plan to get them to stick around? While retention can never be 100%, one can take control of the problem by understanding the reasons and then addressing the top reasons members don't renew. Renewal strategy is a critical component of revenue. When it's neglected, any association risks undermining your financial health and your overall ability to serve members long-term.

According a report done by the 2021 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report, it is estimated that:

- 50% of associations find it it's **lack of engagement with the organisation**
- 39% of associations find it's because of a **lack of value**
- 33% of associations said it's because **employers won't pay or stopped paying dues**
- 31% of associations believe it's because **members left the field, industry, or profession**
- 29% of associations say it's because **members forgot to renew**
- 28% of associations report that **members couldn't justify membership costs without any significant ROI**

Let's go through and address each issue and how it can be fixed.

Reason #1: Lack of engagement with the organisation

According to the report, **the biggest reason members aren't renewing is because they don't feel engaged.** Focus on improving real engagement as a part of your membership renewal strategy, and you'll see improved retention.

Reason #2 & #6: Lack of value or unable to justify costs with significant ROI

Let's look at these together, since they've got similar root causes and solutions. Almost 40% of members aren't renewing because they don't see value in paying for your organisation. Since we both know your association offers amazing member benefits, the problem may simply be miscommunication.

Providing ROI to members entails a few key communication needs:



- You know what value members expect from joining your organisation.
- You communicate where and when they can get what they want.
- You make what they want easily accessible.

Reasons #3: Employer stopped paying

Of the six retention issues, this one will probably be the toughest for you to solve, since these reasons for not renewing are external. However, the best way to meet these kinds of retention issues is to make your association membership so valuable that dropping it is out of the question, even during a tough time.

Reason #4: Member left the field, industry, or profession

If you can make your association membership so valuable that dropping it is out of the question, even when you're no longer in the industry (for example, retired people who want to stay connected), you may retain a few. However, you likely won't be able to renew them, which means you'll need to account for that in member recruitment to grow overall.

Reason #5: Forgot to renew

You can't let members forget that renewal is coming up. Lack of action on the part of the association is the easiest issue to control. Your members should decide not to renew for a relevant reason, not because you let them forget.

Noma Muzunze

LEADING WOMEN SERIES

DHANU RAJWANI

In this series, we highlight the professional challenges and aspirations of women who serve in Toastmasters. Distinguished Toastmaster Dhanu Rajwani, who is based in Mauritius, is an exceptional leader who is continually growing to the next level of success with her innovative ideas. DTM Dhanu is passionate about her Gavel Clubs and the Global Youth Gavel Clubs! Her language is Effective Communication and her mission is to empower children and adults to realise their potential, to be the leaders they are meant to be! To help them to "reach for the stars and beyond." She is simply UNSTOPPABLE! At 75, she is a leading woman who is still a force to reckon with.

Q. What are some lessons or stories that are unique to your being a leader?

My first lesson learnt in my Toastmasters journey was when our Club President called me and asked me if I wanted to be a Distinguished Toastmaster. I was just 2 steps away! He came to my place and explained it all to me. Everything he said, I was 100% in total agreement with him! It was only after he left, when I was alone with my thoughts, that I started wondering what I had let myself into!! The very thought of the title HPL was so intimidating! I was all nerves! It was then that my grandchildren came to my rescue! "Start teaching children how to talk well, the

Toastmasters way. We will be your first students," they said. Borrowing their belief in me, I started out on teaching children Effective Communication, Public Speaking & Leadership skills. My entire HPL project went off so smoothly, so successfully, so much so that I decided there and then, Gavel Clubs is my way forward. With the help of my grandchildren, the VoiceOut Gavel Club was chartered, on May 5th 2015! What a proud moment it was for me! Of course I didn't stop there; the second VoiceOut Gavel club was chartered in 2017. A third one came along two years later, to date, the fourth one is underway. The last two are still to be chartered because I am still recruiting more charter members. Hopefully soon!

My second lesson is when Covid struck! I learnt that where there is a will, there is always a way. The entire world came to a standstill. Physically the world stopped. Unimaginable before then, right? However, we went online, the world shrunk, connecting globally online became the norm. Being extremely technically challenged, I was lost. Was I going to let that get me down? No way!

By chance, I attended an online Toastmasters Contest in which many countries were participating; I was super Impressed. The entire event was so seamlessly done, and it left

me thinking, 'why can't I do something like this for my Gavel Clubs?' Being impulsive by nature, I immediately sent out as many emails and Whatsapp messages that my limited technological knowledge allowed me to. To my amazement, 20 Counselors responded, no one knew anyone, each one of us had the same vision.... the overall betterment of the future of our world, our children! Each of the Counselors took the project as their own. Within a month, the first ever International Global Gavel Clubs contest started with a bang and ended with a resounding applause. Global Youth Gavel Clubs started with just 20 Clubs, but now boast of 180 clubs worldwide and we are still growing, thanks to technology.

Q. What are the best & worst decisions you've ever made?

My best decision was to join Toastmasters. I have loved and enjoyed every minute of it and I am still enjoying it. Toastmasters has become my way of life. My worst decision: I took way too long before I decided to join the Toastmasters family.

Q. What leadership traits do you admire the most?

Leadership qualities that I admire the most are the 5 C's: Courage, Confidence, Consistency, Competence and Clarity, along with this, Integrity and Enthusiasm are as important. A leader is a lifelong student.

Q. What's the best advice you have ever received?

As a leader, be the role model for each and every person you come in contact with. As a leader, what I think, feel and say has to be in sync for me to be effective.

Q. Would you have done anything differently in terms of your career or personal life if you knew what you know now?

Oh yes! I would have started a lot earlier when I had the energy to do more.

Q. How do you unwind after work?

My work never stresses me out, I love my work, hence the question of unwinding doesn't arise. However, I love talking to my friends and watching/listening to speeches, Table Topics and Evaluations. They fascinate me and I never get tired of those.

Martha Mpakula



2023/2024 INTERNATIONAL SPEECH CONTEST DISTRICT CHAMPION: IAN BRATT

District 74 recently crowned Ian Bratt as its District International Speech Contest winner at the just-ended hybrid ThunderCon Conference hosted in Zimbabwe. We had an opportunity to sit down with the champion to find out more about his Toastmasters journey and his road to the District Championship.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and your Toastmasters speaking journey.

My wife, Val, and I joined Toastmasters in November 1981, two months after we arrived in South Africa from the UK. It was a way of meeting people in Springs, where we lived at the time. I also realised that I could benefit from improving my presentation skills as I had never received any previous training in that area. I saw it as a way to help my career, which I believe it definitely did.

I have now been a member for 41 years and of six Toastmasters Clubs: Springs (which closed in the mid-1990s), Breakaway/Boksburg (which closed in 2000), Benoni (of which I am still a member) and three which I helped to start – Highway Toastmasters in KZN, Positive Speakers in Soweto and Refined Raconteurs in Springs (of which I am still a member).

I have a doctorate in Chemistry from the University of Cambridge. I worked in the Precious Metals industry for 35 years, 31 of which were at Impala Platinum Refineries in Springs. I formally retired in 2016 but I am currently a sessional lecturer in Chemistry at the University of Witwatersrand.

How did you prepare for this year's Contest and who has been your biggest influence throughout this journey?

I first entered the speech Contests in the mid-1980s, but it wasn't until 2003 that I started to have some success in reaching District Finals. That year I came 3rd in the District Table Topics Contest (the topic was "Touch") and competed in the District Evaluation contest but wasn't placed. I subsequently competed in several District Table Topics and Evaluation Contests, winning the Evaluation Contest at the Laduma conference in 2010.

I have reached the final of the International Speech Contest on four previous occasions (2007, 2008, 2017 and 2019) but didn't place at any of them. Of course, all those were in-person contests, so this year's Contest was very different in that it was totally online.

After speaking in Contests for so many years, coming up with a topic is always the hardest part. Once I have that, I look for personal

stories that I believe will support my message. It is then a question of writing and re-writing the speech, getting feedback and trying to improve the speech at each level. This is critical as many speakers think that they can just write the speech and keep giving the same one. The speech I gave in the District final was the 13th revision of the speech, made possible by all the input I received from many Toastmasters during my 2023 Contest journey.

In terms of people who have had an influence on me as a speaker, I have had many over the years. However, for this year's Contest, my son, Michael, who is also a Toastmaster, has been a great help. We have developed a great rivalry over the past few years in speech Contests and indeed, my first hurdle is to beat him at our Benoni Club Contest. Having done that, he is only too willing to provide constructive feedback each time I present my speech. Hopefully, one day in the not-too-distant future, he can follow in my footsteps and also become a District Champion.

What is the one tip that you can give aspiring speech contestants to improve their speaking skills?

Keep learning from the best. Many years ago, I purchased sets of CDs (remember them?) and DVDs from previous World Champions of Public Speaking – Darren laCroix, Ed Tate, Craig Valentine and Lance Miller. Listening to and watching these provided not only inspiration but many tips on how to improve my speeches. Don't try to imitate these speakers, be original, but do what they do in terms of best speaking practice and that will really elevate your speaking to the next level.

I was fortunate to meet Ed Tate, Craig Valentine, Mark Brown, Lance Miller and Mohammed Khatani in person at previous District 74 conferences and I hope that future organisers will look at bringing out a past World Champion for a future conference.

How do you overcome the nerves and anxiety that comes with performing at such an advanced level?

I think it is a question of practising the speech, getting feedback and fine-tuning it until I was happy with the end result. One advantage of Zoom is that you can easily record yourself and play it back so that you can evaluate your own performance, something that is much harder to do for an in-person presentation. The more you practise, the less nervous and more confident you will become when presenting. However, you still need to feel the nerves to give you that edge when you present. Finally, try and give the speech as if it were the last

time you are ever going to give it and give it your all.

What is next for Ian Bratt?

Fingers crossed for the Regional contest about which I can do nothing as it is judged on the video from the District Contest. I rather fancy a trip to the Bahamas!

My biggest passion is helping other people to improve their communication and leadership skills, be it as a member of a Club or at a Speechcraft or Youth Leadership course.

I will also be developing my new venture, Compass Presentations, which is looking to train and coach managers and executives to make better presentations and maybe there is a book about my Toastmasters journey waiting to be written.

People are most welcome to contact me at ianbratt@global.co.za

Wame Namponya



2023/2024 ELECTED DISTRICT LEADERS

TOASTMASTERS SOUTHERN AFRICA 2023/24 CABINET ELECT



Since
1924



www.toastmasters74.org

Saturday 6th May saw the election of the new District leaders for the 2023/2024 year at the hybrid District Council meeting. With the highly contested Club Growth Director position, the tension was palpable for the people in person as people voted for the two incoming directors. Congratulations to all the incoming Cabinet and Division Directors. With the reformation of District 74 into two separate Districts in 2024, we wish all the incoming leaders success as they take the District to a higher level.

Leya Musunga

NO, I IN TEAM WITH FADZISO BLAINE MANGO

I am a recent production engineering graduate from the Chinhoyi University of Technology. I describe myself as an imaginative and inquisitive individual. I am passionate about bringing innovative solutions to create a sustainable future for the world. I joined Simba reDzidzo

Toastmasters in July 2021 and became the inaugural President of the Club. I am actively involved in community service.

Before joining Toastmasters, I used to think leadership was more about exercising authority and standing out so that you can feel good about yourself. When I became a leader in Toastmasters, I began to understand that leadership is more about servitude than leading people. You need to make sure everyone in your team is performing their role well for you to achieve goals, and for that you need to be assisting each and every one through it all. There really is no I in a TEAM. A team's success depends on everyone's effort and not necessarily my individual effort as a leader.

I am incredibly grateful for the unwavering support from the Simba reDzidzo founder Dr Gerald Chitsunge, Area Director, Toastmaster Brenda Zimbawora, my mentor, Toastmaster Busi Chiware and the executive members. Whenever I require advice or help with something, I can always go to them for assistance.

In the past, I was inhibited by shyness and I struggled significantly with public speaking. However, being part of

Toastmasters has made me overcome my fear of public speaking and I can now articulate my views confidently. Toastmasters provides a platform for people to practice their communication and public speaking skills in a supportive environment. The organisation has helped thousands of people (including myself) to become phenomenal speakers and great leaders.

Noma Muzunze



2023/2024 ELECTED DISTRICT LEADERS



Penny Phakathi
Division A



Dilshaad Rajabalee
Division B



Benjamin Akinmoyeje DTM
Division D



Grace Liwewe
Division E



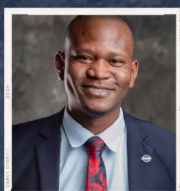
Lebogang Mogolane
Division H



João Sarmiento DTM
Division I



Tlou Matshitsho
Division L



Jahon Mayeya DTM
Division M



Leya Musunga
Division O



Rudi van Niekerk DTM
Division P



Pamela Msibi
Division S



Phillipa Chengeta
Division W



Michael Shackleton DTM
Division Y

**TOASTMASTERS
SOUTHERN AFRICA
DIVISION DIRECTORS
ELECTS**



Since
1924



Agab Dozva
Division Z



Thundercon in pictures



Thundercon in pictures



How did people feel about Thundercon?

Thundercon lived to its billing.
Everything was top notch.
I cannot wait for Dreamcon.
Gracious Changaya - Malawi

The conference was an amazing
experience to network, to see and hear
testimonies from brilliant Toastmasters
that Inspire and make believe that
leaderships and communications are
power tools for professional and
personal grow.
Carla Lopes Mendonça - Mozambique

An opportunity for us to be together
again, engage with our champion
speakers and attend world class
workshops. For 3 days,
"Smoke that Thunders" became
"Speeches that Thunder!"
João Sarmento - Angola

Thundercon 2023 was in all sense
exhilarating - the speakers and speeches
were insightful, every moment was a
peak. The social events were awesome
and final vicfalls was beyond
expectations.
100% on point and beyond.
Benjamin Akinmoye - Namibia

An experience I will use as a
tool to break out
of my shell.
Lame Mthethwa - Botswana

Standing on bridges for
the awakening of dreams.
Zainab Soyfoo - Mauritius

A memorable event that helped
me to network with other
Toastmasters members from
Southern Africa.
Brenda Zimbowora - Zimbabwe

Unique toastmasters'
lifetime experience!
Faso Ramangamihanta - Madagascar

Thundercon was packed with thought
provoking presentations, inspiration and
with the mighty picturesque Victoria
Falls, every moment was special!!
Lebogang Tselayakhumo - Botswana

Thundercon - WOW
the interesting people, the
inspiring speeches and amazing
outings - a true adventure!!!
Belita von Steiger - South Africa

It was a rewarding experience , full
of learning, laughter, networking
and meeting virtual communities in
person. I am encouraged to
continue seeking opportunities to
serve and making a difference as
we have seen through those that
have gone before us.
Rizwana Bhadurkhan - Zambia

EDUCATION

PATHWAYS - FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

When I reached Level 3 on Pathways, I was in quite a quandary as to which of the 13 electives I would select. There was one particular elective which had never tickled my fancy and I constantly found myself ignoring – the Focus on the Positive elective. I like to believe I am an optimist – a glass half full person – so I didn't see the need for any further focusing on the positive.

I reluctantly selected the elective and on reading through the entire tutorial, I was amazed at how applicable this elective is to my everyday life. I very quickly learnt that I was very much in need of focusing on the positive. As per the tutorial, I started keeping a journal where I took note of negative thoughts that could disrupt

my productivity and general happiness. I also started a daily gratitude journal where I noted every occurrence, or thought of something to be grateful for.

Life changing is the one word I can use to describe what this elective has done for me. This project taught me:

To consciously redirect my thoughts to be more positive when I encounter negative thoughts or situations;

To be able to recognize the impact of different types of behaviours when interacting with others;

To be an active listener; and

To be more productive as a result of positivity.

Rudo Masango

TOASTMASTERS AND MENTAL HEALTH: DEVELOPING STRONG COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING

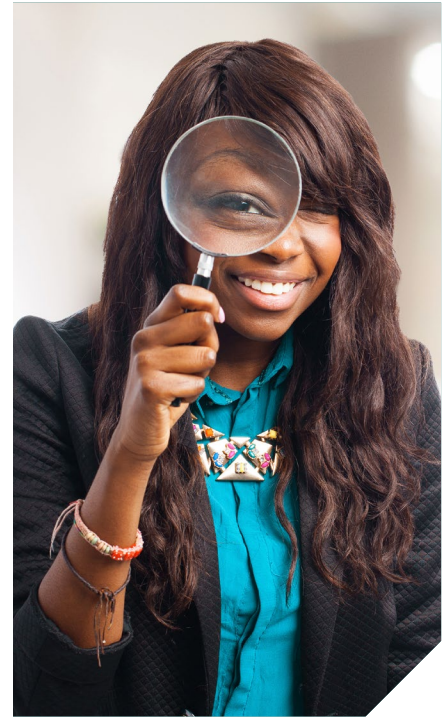
This Mental Health Awareness Month it is important to remember that Toastmasters International is not just a resource for those looking to develop their communication and leadership skills; it can also be a valuable tool for improving mental health. By providing a supportive environment for practicing public speaking, building self-esteem and developing strong relationships, Toastmasters can help members live happier and healthier lives.

Public speaking has long been known to be a source of anxiety for many people. In fact, public speaking anxiety is the most common social anxiety disorder, affecting as many as 73% of the population (Stein MB,

Stein DJ. Social anxiety disorder. Lancet. 2008;371(9618):1115–25.) The fear of being judged or evaluated by others can lead to feelings of stress, nervousness and even panic.

Toastmasters can be an excellent resource for those looking to improve their mental health. Through regular practice and constructive feedback, members are able to build their confidence and overcome their fears of public speaking. Improved self-esteem can also translate into other areas of life, leading to greater assertiveness, better social skills and a stronger sense of self-worth.

In addition to improving self-esteem, communication skills can positively impact relationships, both personal



and professional. By learning to express themselves more clearly and confidently, members can build deeper connections with others and resolve conflicts more effectively. This, in turn, can lead to greater overall satisfaction and reduced stress levels.

Toastmasters also provides a supportive community for individuals dealing with mental health issues. Members can share their struggles with others who understand and offer support and encouragement. The organisation's values of respect, integrity, excellence and service provide a foundation for building strong, positive relationships that can have a lasting impact on well-being.

Of course, Toastmasters alone cannot treat mental health issues, but it can be a valuable tool in a broader wellness plan. Members can develop stronger coping mechanisms and a more positive outlook on life by improving communication skills and building self-esteem. This can, in turn, lead to improved mental health outcomes.

Edith Utete

EDUCATION SEGMENT



MEMBER MOMENT: NONOFHO KGOTLAETSHO

Nonofho first heard about Toastmasters in 2021 at a workshop and has since used the platform to manage his stage fright, boldly express his opinions in front of any audience and build his confidence. As someone who once feared public speaking more than death itself, he began to notice a marked difference in his speaking after completing Level 2 in Pathways.

The Gaborone Breakfast Club President has learnt that through Toastmasters, he is capable of becoming the persuasive speaker that he wants to be, focusing specifically on speaking that effortlessly changes people's perspectives on various societal issues. Nonofho recently participated in the International Speech Contest where he emerged as the 2022/2023 Division O

International Speech Champion. He noted that the Contest is the quickest way to accelerate growth as a public speaker because the stakes are high. He firmly believes that, as people in general, we don't have a good sense of who we really are because we see ourselves by our intentions and he wanted to have a good sense of the level of speaker he is and the only way that he could do that was by competing.

He resonates with the words of Franklin Roosevelt who said that "courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is far more important than fear," and further believes that we must compete with ourselves and not with other people

Wame Namponya

“*Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is far more important than fear*”

KOBIE LOTTERING: OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

There is a famous quote by Gina Milicia that says, "A comfort zone is a beautiful place to be but nothing grows there", and this is where Kobie Lottering was a few years ago. She recalls someone telling her, "Don't join an easy group, don't go where the demands are low. Join a difficult group where the demands are high, where you can grow and change. Don't compromise and don't sell out." That's when she decided to join Toastmasters in 2015.

A member of Centurion Toastmasters Club since 2018, Kobie works as a professional nurse and practice manager at Wilgers Hospital in Pretoria East. She enjoys playing tennis and swimming. "I have learnt that it is easy to lose sight of the important things in life, so for me,

my family always comes first. I have a grandson with Autism and he is the center of my existence."

When she started her journey, she had a goal to complete her Pathway which she knew would be a challenge but with the help of her fellow Toastmasters she was able to achieve her goal and has thus far completed three (3) Pathways and is currently busy with her fourth one, Dynamic Leadership. The one word that would describe Kobie is "passionate." "If I decide to do something, I do everything to the best of my ability to make it a success."

She has thus far served as Club President and is currently the Area Y2 Director in Division Y. Kobie has also had the opportunity to be a facilitator for various Speechcraft programmes, "to experience the growth of the

learners is a great highlight of my Toastmasters journey. I have learnt in Toastmasters that if you help with the development of others, you grow more in the process."

In the words of Maya Angelou, Kobie believes that "my mission in life is not merely to survive but to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour and some style. I believe that Toastmasters can change your life and opportunities for growth are unlimited in Toastmasters!"

Leya Musunga



MENTORSHIP THE GREATEST GIFT: VILLENE VENTER



Villene Venter has been a Toastmasters since June 2020 and is a member of Act Toastmasters in Gqeberha, South Africa. She describes herself as a bit of a bookworm. "Books are very important in our home and I read a lot." Villene is a baker by trade who specialises in higher end Cake Decorating for special occasions. "I have been in the business for 13 years and feel it is quite an honour to play a small part in someone's celebration." She is also a dog trainer and owns a Dog School named Paws 1 on 1 and competes in different Dog Sports with her dog, Selena.

“Mentoring is the greatest help any Toastmaster can get...”

She has been able to achieve the Triple Crown Award twice and is one of the Top 10 VPEs in the Level Up Awards. With meetings being held online she has had the privilege of attending a Toastmasters meeting in Bahrain which she describes as quite surreal. "I never would have imagined being part of a meeting on another continent."

When asked about what help she has gotten to achieve her goals she mentioned mentoring. "Mentoring is the greatest help any Toastmaster can get, and for me it was key to what I did, how I was able to overcome and what I achieved in the end. I am really grateful for Angie Kivido who is my mentor. She believed in me before I believed in myself. Even now as I complete my third Pathway, I still contact her for advice and guidance. This is the greatest gift Toastmasters has given each of us, mentorship."

One of the biggest challenges she has faced in her Toastmasters journey so far was when she was asked to take up the position of VP Education. "I did not have a clear idea of what it would entail even after reading all the literature provided. After attending my first Club Officer training, I realised it would need clear thinking, good planning and a passion for the progress of each member," she said.

So how did she tackle the role? Villene decided to spend time with people who had previously taken on the role. With Glenis Whitehead, she was able to learn how and what tools he had used previously to plan and keep track of progress of members. The outgoing VP Education, Gerald Pietersen, gave her additional insight on how he managed the role, for example how to use the Toastmasters platform as the key to success in helping the Club to achieve and maintain President's Distinguished status.

A valuable lesson she has learnt so far is to use the tools provided. "Those who have gone before, who have walked the path I now walk, have made the mistakes for me. Mentorship really is the gift that we are given as Toastmasters and which I now can give to my mentee, setting them on the path to achieve their goals."

In conclusion, Villene would like to be remembered as someone who gave others the break they needed to get ahead, no matter how small. "It is vital to me, to help someone on their journey towards their dream."

Leya Musunga

GLOSSOPHOBIA

Did you know that the fear of public speaking - also known as glossophobia - is one of the most common fears? The National Institute of Mental Health reports that public speaking anxiety affects about 73% of the world's population.

There are several reasons why people have anxiety when having to speak before an audience and some of those reasons are as follows:

Fear and anxiety of public speaking leads to the emotional experience of fear and it interferes with our ability to perform comfortably in front of audiences.

Our Thoughts - negative thoughts and views of ourselves and public speakers as well as thoughts of making fools of ourselves before an audience, can raise anxiety and amplify the fear of speaking in public.

The fear of being judged by the audience or getting a negative evaluation.

Dr. Craig Sawchuck, a Clinical Psychologist at Mayo Clinic offers some suggestions on how one can overcome their fear of public speaking, as follows:

Know your topic and speak on a topic that you care about, that way you are less likely to make a mistake and even if you do, you can recover quickly.

Get organised ahead of your speech. It will help you relax more. There is nothing worse than being in a frazzled state moments before you are to speak.

Practice and practice some more - practice makes near perfect.

Visualize that your presentation will go well. You are likely to get a better outcome from positive thoughts than negative ones.

Get support by joining a group which offers support for people who want to develop their public speaking such as Toastmasters.

Rudo Masango

THE ART OF STORYTELLING: TIPS TO CAPTIVATE AND IMPACT

The art of storytelling is a powerful tool for any Toastmaster looking to improve their public speaking skills. While it can be challenging to perfect, storytelling is an art that can captivate an audience and leave a lasting impact.

The key element of a great story is its ability to connect with the audience on an emotional level. This can be achieved by incorporating personal experiences, vivid imagery and relatable characters into the narrative. When a story is told with passion, authenticity and engaging details, the audience is more likely to remember and be moved by it.

A successful story should also have a clear structure. It should have a beginning that sets the scene and introduces the characters, a middle that builds tension and drama and an ending that provides closure or a satisfying resolution. The use of plot twists, unexpected turns and suspense can also enhance the story's impact.

When preparing to tell a story, it's important to consider the audience and their interests. An effective story should be tailored to the audience's demographic, culture and preferences. For example, if the audience is made up of business professionals, a story that involves business challenges and how they were overcome may be more relatable and engaging.

Finally, being able to deliver a story with effective language and body language can make all the difference. For instance, using vocal variety, hand gestures and facial expressions can help convey emotions and emphasise important points.

The art of storytelling is an important skill that every Toastmaster should strive to master. With its ability to connect with an audience on an emotional level and its power to leave a lasting impact, a well-crafted story can make a speech memorable and inspiring. By incorporating personal experiences, using vivid details, structuring the story effectively, and delivering the story with effective language and body language, Toastmasters can effectively share their message in an entertaining and engaging way.

Edith Utete

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SPEECH EVALUATION

As a Toastmasters evaluator, your role is to provide feedback to the speaker to help them improve their communication skills. It's a balancing act between being positive and constructive, while also being specific and critical. Here are some do's and don'ts to keep in mind when evaluating a speech:

Do's:

1. Be respectful: Remember to always be respectful to the speaker and focus on their strengths as well as areas where they can improve.
2. Be specific: Provide specific examples from the speech to help the speaker understand what you are referring to. Be concrete and provide clear feedback on what could be improved in terms of content, delivery and gestures.
3. Use "I" statements: When providing feedback, use "I" statements to avoid making assumptions about the speaker's intentions or motivations.
4. Be supportive and encouraging: Encourage the speaker to keep practicing and give them some tips on how they could improve their public speaking skills.

Don'ts:

1. Don't make it personal: Avoid attacking the speaker's character or skills, or making personal attacks. Remember, your role is to provide feedback in a constructive manner.
2. Don't interrupt: Allow the speaker to finish their speech before giving your feedback - interrupting the speaker is disrespectful and can distract from their message.
3. Don't be vague: Avoid making generalisations or being vague in your feedback, as it can be difficult for the speaker to understand what they need to improve.
4. Don't ignore the positives: Make sure to also acknowledge the speaker's strengths and provide examples of what they did well. This will help boost their confidence and encourage them to keep practicing.

Following these do's and don'ts can help you provide effective feedback to speakers in a Toastmasters meeting. Remember, the goal is to help each other improve communication skills and build a supportive community. With practice and patience, both evaluators and speakers can learn and grow together.

Edith Utete



MEMBER MOMENT: VASHUDA DEGNARAIN

Toastmasters has taught Vashuda Degnarain two lessons; one on how to impress the audience in only seven minutes and, two, the magic or power of feedback in real life situations. A member of the Mauritius Revenue Authority Toastmasters Club, she has been a Toastmaster for almost 26 months. She describes herself as a hybrid Economics/HR person. "I am a holder of a first degree in Economics from the University of Mauritius. Thereafter, I decided to diversify, and completed a Masters in Human Resource Management from the University of Griffith in Australia." She is currently working as a Team Leader in the Human Resources and Training Department at the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

Vashuda's journey in Toastmasters has been very fruitful for two reasons. Firstly, her role of VP Membership, has brought her closer to the Club members, many of whom she did not know, secondly, taking on this role has helped to keep her progressing on her Pathway. She has been able to complete four levels thus far. "At the beginning, each time I delivered a speech, it was equivalent to the stress of finding a new and unique story. I also did not have a Mentor, so I was surfing the Toastmasters website on my own. I strongly feel that for any new member, on top of the Induction Ceremony, it is important to have a dedicated Mentor to accompany that person." To help with the navigation of Basecamp, the Club organised various Educational sessions to be delivered from other experienced members in Mauritius.

"The Toastmasters International website contains a wealth of information to make someone a better leader and speaker. I am always agog to discover the glossary of resources and projects available on the website."

Leya Musunga

Thundercon in pictures



EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

THUNDERCON: ARRIVAL AND DAY ONE

This year's conference, dubbed 'Thundercon,' was held for the first time outside the borders of South Africa, in the beautiful city of Victoria Falls. Delegates from all over Southern Africa descended on the city with excitement and lots of energy. For some, this would be their first in-person conference and an opportunity to experience one of the great wonders of the world; the mighty Victoria Falls. Arrivals and check-ins were done on Thursday 4 May and delegates were welcomed with a local baobab infused drink. Delegates had



the opportunity to tour the falls during the afternoon as the amazing Boma dinner was scheduled for later that evening.

With all the delegates decked out in their African attire, it was a great evening at the Boma dinner, as a variety of food was served. Interestingly, one could get a certificate for tasting the Mopane worms. The highlight of the night would surely be the Drum session that everyone got to participate in. Everyone got to tap into their inner child as they beat the drums into the night.

Friday 5 May marked the official start of the conference with the flag ceremony as the various flags of District 74 were set-up on the stage. The delegates then got to experience an amazing traditional dance performance as we were welcomed by the conference convener, Maxine Mugabe. The honoured guest, the Mayor of Victoria Falls, accorded Toastmasters the run of the City. The morning progressed with a



spoken word artist Zainab Soyfoo who said that even if our tongues are different our smiles are the same. This was followed by Lloyd Mugabe who presented his keynote speech titled Skarabanga, which is a word one uses when they are about to jump or take a leap into something. The word skarabanga was definitely heard on various lips during the conference.

The audience was then treated to a Personal Branding masterclass by Patience Chisanga-Mayer. Various authors within Toastmasters were interviewed as they shared stories that provide impact. This session was facilitated by Hugo Ribatika. And before heading for the much deserved lunchbreak, Trynos Dongo shared in the masterclass how one can turn their 'voice into an invoice.'

The afternoon session saw the delegates reading through some pages of the Toastmasters International May 2023 edition with Dorothy Chanakira, as people Toasted and Read. The session ended with the 2021 World Champion of Public Speaking, Verity Price, sharing steps on writing a winning speech. Delegates online and in-person also had an opportunity to ask Verity various questions.

Leya Musunga



POWER COMMUNICATION TOASTMASTERS CLUB AND FINANCIAL TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Friendship is not only found in our Club or even a small group of people, friendship can also be between two groups which merge to make a better group. PowerCom Toastmasters Club and Financial Toastmasters Club - both under Area B2 - share the same meeting day and time for their fortnightly meetings. This year we decided to have joint meetings. Three meetings later, our friendships have grown.

We got good feedback for speeches at every level, from level 1 to level 5. The more the joint sessions, the more the speeches and the more the feedback and different points of view. In one session we got one trainer and speakers and in another session we got a speech marathon of 8 speeches and 8 evaluations. Our guests got to experience how a level 1 and a level 5 speech are different. It feels great bonding as a family every time we meet.

Not only have we created great bonds between Clubs but we have made more friends, networked and now know each other better, making our Area stronger. For the last three sessions, our Clubs make the meetings more fun and our members know each other better. We also congratulate PowerCom for bouncing back from their low attendance and to date, they have recruited about 17 new members.

Sarah-Jane IP Kwong

THUNDERCON: DAY 2

Day two commenced with the District Council meeting that saw the election of the incoming District leaders. After the intense voting of the morning, it was now time for the District International Speech Contest. Despite some initial technical delays, the Contest got underway. It was amazing to witness the crowd's reactions to the delegates that gathered to watch the online Contest. There was a constant supply of drinks and snacks and the energy in the room was filled with excitement. Being able to witness the applause and intense laughter from the crowd was a great revelation for people who have not experienced in-person Contests. When the final winners were announced there was great thunderous cheer in the room. The winners were as follows:



International Speech Contest

- 1st place - Ian Bratt
- 2nd place - Gary Tintinger
- 3rd Place - Shingirai Mutambirwa



Evaluation Contest

- 1st place - Laurens Boel
- 2nd place - Zani Barrish
- 3rd Place - Prishani Nundkisun

Table Topics Contest

- 1st place - Namatai Kwekweza
- 2nd place - Miracle Chawane
- 3rd Place - Sade Naidoo

Afterwards it was a rush to prepare and get ready for the Gala Dinner themed 'Casino Royale.' The night was filled with glitz and glamour as the delegates came dressed to the nines. The Hall of Fame awards were presented as the delegates dined on their starters. Afterwards, dinner was served and during dessert it was time for the conference convener, Maxine Mugabe, to give the closing remarks as she handed over to the next convener Kirstin Bosworth who asked the delegates if they had registered for the next conference - DreamCon - which will take place in South Africa. The flags were finally brought down and then it was time to dance the night away. Thank you to all the people who worked diligently to ensure ThunderCon was a success.

Leya Musunga



May Club Anniversaries

A

Forum Toastmasters (47)
 FSCA Toastmasters (5)
 Totius Masters (8)

B**D**

City Bowel, Cape Town Toastmasters Club (44)
 Two Oceans (32)

E**H**

Dainfern Tigers Toastmasters Club (9)
 Diamonds Toastmasters Club (7)

I

Refined Racounteurs (16)
 Sasol Secunda Toastmasters (4)
 SPAR SRDC (4)

L

Johannesburg Toastmasters (73)
 Modikwa Toastmasters Club (2)
 Two Rivers Toastmasters club (2)

M

CIMA Toastmasters Zambia (6)
 SBM Toastmasters (4)

O

Firstmasters Botswana (4)
 ABC Toastmasters (8)

P**S**

Honeydew Club (30)
 Ignite Toastmasters Club (3)

Y

MBSA Toastmasters Club (6)

Z

New Clubs

SPAR Executive Toastmasters

Charter Date 30 March 2023
Division Y
Location Johannesburg

Seriti

Charter Date 01 April 2023
Division I
Location Johannesburg

Sasol Energy

Charter Date 21 April 2023
Division S
Location Sandton, Gauteng

SpeakUp Toastmasters

Charter Date 30 April 2023
Division S
Location Johannesburg, Gauteng



District 74 | Southern Africa

2023/2024 - CHAMPIONSHIP OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Toastmasters Southern Africa International Speech Contest Winner

Ian
Bratt



Toastmasters Southern Africa International Speech Contest Winner

Gary
Tintinger



Toastmasters Southern Africa International Speech Contest Winner

Shingirai
Mutambirwa



Toastmasters Southern Africa Evaluations Contest Winner

Laurens
Boel



Toastmasters Southern Africa Evaluations Contest Winner

Zani
Barrish



Toastmasters Southern Africa Evaluations Contest Winner

Prishani
Nundkisun



Toastmasters Southern Africa Table Topics Contest Winner

Namatai
Kwekweza



Toastmasters Southern Africa Table Topics Contest Winner

Miracle
Chawane



Toastmasters Southern Africa Table Topics Contest Winner

Sade
Naidoo

