

[Metro.net](#) (web)

## Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)  
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

## Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

## Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk  
at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)

Toastmasters International has had a chapter at Metro since June, 1997. The present group membership is at 20 and the group meets in the Board Overflow Conference Room on Tuesdays, noon to 1 p.m.



Photos: Gayle Anderson

## Metro Toastmasters Chapter Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

By JIMMY STROUP

(Aug. 5, 2007) Clubs can be fleeting. People get busy. People lose interest. So making the decade mark says quite a lot about what the Metro Toastmasters chapter has to offer those who participate.

Based around improving the public speaking – or just plain speaking in general – Toastmasters International has been around since 1924. What started as a small group of friends who gathered to practice their communication skills has exploded into a worldwide trend, with chapters in 90 countries and more than 200,000 members.



Started in 1924, Toastmasters International has more than 10,000 chapters in 90 countries and 200,000 members. 'It's given me a lot of confidence,' says current chapter president Joe Simpson, at left. Above, Area 41 Governor Michael Gholampour drops in for a visit.

In the 10 years since the Metro chapter was founded in June, 1997, the agency's Toastmaster group has grown and set a high mark for the current membership to follow. The group has even had members compete and win at national events held at conferences hosted by Toastmasters International, which

is based in Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.

“Every part of our meeting asks you to do a little thing that involves speaking,” said Joe Simpson, Metro Webmaster and the Toastmasters’ chapter president. “It’s given me a lot of confidence.”



Toastmasters at Metro members meet in June to ring out the old year and ring in new officers at a year-end celebration led by outgoing president Falan Guan, center.

Confidence-building is one of the central tenets of the Toastmasters program. The group believes that with enough practice, even the most timid of speakers can become bold and exciting when communicating.

“I always felt like I needed to communicate better in an office environment,” Simpson said. “The great thing for me is, as the Webmaster, I have to communicate a lot of technical terms. So it’s given me a better grasp of how I want to communicate some of those very complicated ideas.”

The weekly meetings feature both group and individual exercises, all aimed at strengthening the participants’ ability to communicate in various situations. “Table topics,” Simpson said, is one of the standard communication drills the group does weekly to bolster both skill and confidence.

**‘Thinking on your feet’**

“In a lot of your daily comings and goings, you’ll be asked to speak on the spur of the moment. A ‘table topic’ is a random topic you have to speak on for one or two minutes,” he said. “If you don’t know anything about the subject, you have to improvise – it teaches you how to manage when you aren’t familiar with the topic. It gets you in the mode of thinking on your feet.”

Simpson points to himself as the model for what Toastmasters can do for the average “Joe.” The confidence he’s gained



Catch their act: Attend a virtual meeting on the [Toastmasters@Metro](#) blog. Below, Toastmasters Kathy Hendry, Paul Burke and Cynthia Jimerson command the podium.

by participating in the group for the last three years has had irreplaceable positive benefits on both his ability to speak and his career at Metro.



“I think there’s some stat that says most people are afraid to speak in public. In the business setting, if you’re able to communicate better, chances are you’ll move up the ladder,” Simpson said. “If you want to move up, if you have career aspirations, being a better communicator can only help.”

The 20 or so regular members of the Metro chapter of Toastmasters meets Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. in the Board Overflow Conference Room in the Gateway Building. Simpson said guests are always welcome.



“If you want to be a better speaker, have fun doing it, with a group of people that’s very supportive, I think you should come by,” Simpson said.

