

Mercury's Messenger



On stage at Convention

Four Mercurians joined fellow District 69 representatives at this year's International Convention in the USA. From left: Judith McConnell, 2009 World Champion of Public Speaking Mark Hunter, Immediate Past International President Gary Schmidt, Immediate Past District Governor Coral McVean, 2010-2011 District Governor Bruce George, International Director Region 12 Mike Storkey, Lt Governor Education & Training John Kay, Past District Governor Barrie Fuller, Regional Advisor Marketing Region 12 Sue Haynes, Past District Governor Di Riddell, Evelyn Fuller, Fran Kay, Carol Rogers, Val McCallum, Terry Sheppard, Pushpa Vida, Carolyn Phillips and Hanna Wassenaar. *Read Fran's report on page 6.*

Bi-monthly bulletin of
Mercury's Motivators
Toastmasters Club

Club: 711243
Central Division
District 69

Vision:

Mercury's is a professional club which provides fun, fellowship and innovation combined with epicurean delights

Meets 4th weekend of every month at various locations around Queensland's Sunshine Coast



Executive committee:

- President:
Sue Kruger
- Vice President Education:
Ian Pinker
- Vice President Membership:
Coral McVean
- Vice President Public Relations:
Brian Duckworth
- Treasurer:
Hugh McVean
- Secretary:
Lorraine Keelty
- Sergeant at Arms:
Judith McConnell

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Mercurians embrace challenge with gusto

Fellow Mercurians, we have had two meetings since the last Bulletin and both were very enjoyable. My thanks to those who took over while Ian and I were away and to those who have filled me in on the details since my return.

My challenge to all of you to *Find New Ways* has been taken up with gusto and I thank you and look forward to much more of it! Area 3 Conference by all accounts was a successful and enjoyable day.

Congratulations to Fran Kay for winning the Evaluation Contest and to Jenny Duckworth for winning the Table Topics Contest.

And very sincere congratulations to one of our newest members Patti Kuss for stepping in and competing at the International Contest. We're all very proud of you! We will be well-represented at the Division Conference next

March. My commiserations must also go to Brian Duckworth who did prepare well and hurry back for his contests but was unable to compete on the day. Next time Brian!

Heartfelt thanks go to Penne Bowles and Kevin Wright who did a lot of the work for the Area 3 Conference with the help and guidance of our Area Governor Gary Kuss .

As the host club we can be proud of what they achieved along with the help on the day of other Mercurians.

Congratulations to Hugh McVean for getting our semi-annual fees in on time, which in fact registered our first



President Sue Kruger throws a coin in the Trevi Fountain during her recent holiday to Europe.

DCP point! We're on track!!

I trust all are enjoying the venues and times of the meetings that Judith McConnell has organized, bearing in mind she worked hard to supply a variety, with some new venues and fairness in travel for all members. Please continue to suggest alternate venues though for future meetings. A *new* wining and dining experience is always welcome!!

Once again, please continue to keep those Marvelous Mercurian Minds working to *Find New Ways* to challenge and excite us!

- Sue Kruger, President

Mercury's Motivators is an advanced club that meets along the Sunshine Coast from Caboolture to Noosa in fabulous venues such as restaurants, wineries, parks and country pubs.

The club meets once a month, generally on the last weekend of the month, with meeting times varying between lunchtime and evenings.

If you have leadership aspirations then come along and learn from the members who hold District positions. The program is stimulating, the company is riveting, the locations are superb and the food is to die for.

All you need to join is to have achieved your Competent Communicator award.

Even if you have not yet achieved this award, you are still welcome to come along as a guest and check out what happens at an advanced club.

Contact the membership officer, Coral McVean on 5441 7820 or email coralmcv@bigpond.net.au

Birthday wishes:

4 Oct - Patti Kuss

9 Nov - B Williams

14 Nov - Esther Frizzo

11 Dec - Gary Kuss

22 Dec - Fran Kay



Congratulations to the club's representatives at the Area 3 Conference on 17 October: Fran Kay (1st in Evaluation contest) and Jenny Duckworth (1st in Table Topics contest). Newly inducted member Patti Kuss also competed in the International speech contest.

Q&A with Jenny

Member profile

When and why did you join Toastmasters?

I joined Toastmasters late in 1988. Brian took me along so I could meet some nice people just after my first marriage broke up. He thought it would be good for my confidence (it was!). I joined Sydney Club - lots of experienced people, including Brian and his parents and Richard and Karen Stacey.

2. What have you gained from being a Toastmaster?

I certainly gained confidence. I was scared to speak up much during school staff meetings, but that all changed, and I took on a leadership role at school, as leader of our school's Disadvantaged Schools Program. I had to lead staff meetings and organise the way the funding was accessed as well as produce the booklet with all our school programs each year. I also started helping Brian with Youth Leadership courses at his schools. Brian and his parents were all Distinguished Toastmasters (DTMs), so

once we were married, I decided not to be the odd one out - I gained my DTM too. Part of this was resurrecting what had been GIO Toastmasters in Sydney, and changing it to Burwood Toastmasters. It took 18 months, but it was a most enjoyable time. I have gained a lot over the years in both the ability to communicate and in leadership areas as well.

3. What club/district roles have you held?

I have held most club roles over the years, as well as being Area 1 Governor in the Sydney CBD and Central Division Governor in District 70.

I also helped organise a couple of District Conferences in D70.

4. How do you use your Toastmasters skills outside of the club?

I have helped organise public speaking activities at Montessori school, and am currently on the executive of Dragons Abreast.

I have been asked to speak at a women's breakfast, at a self-help group at Nambour, and have done a couple of radio interviews as part of Dragons Abreast, promoting the idea that one can have a healthy active lifestyle after breast cancer.



5. What are your hobbies?

I enjoy being a member of a book club. I had wanted to join one in Sydney, but was always too busy with work and Toastmasters. My other hobbies are calligraphy, card making, scrapbooking and a bit of gardening. Our poodle makes sure I walk each morning, and I paddle each week with the dragon boat pink ladies.

6. What do you do for work?

I retired from teaching after more than 30 years, just before we moved to the Sunshine Coast. I'm enjoying hobby time and time spent with grandchildren who live up here.

7. How long have you lived on the Sunshine Coast?

We have lived here for five-and-a-half years.

8. Which is your current home club?

USC Speakers.

9. Why did you join Mercury's Motivators?

We joined Mercury's as we'd been in a similar club in Sydney, and wanted to be challenged by having different venues and more opportunities for stretching myself.

10. What are your next Toastmasters goals?

I'm working on my second Competent Leader, Advanced Communicator Silver, and another Competent Communicator.



ABOVE: Fran Kay (left) and Lorraine Keelty (right) welcome visitor Heather Hopkins to the club's September meeting at Villa Noosa.

Grade 10 group presents high standards

Thirty-four students from Coolum State High School graduated from an 8-week Youth Leadership course in September.

Two back-to-back sessions were held on a Thursday morning to accommodate the large group of Grade 10 students.

They presented their final speeches in front of parents and teachers at their respective graduation nights.

Youth Leadership Coordinator Hari Kotrotsios was impressed by the high standard of the graduation speeches.

“Some of the speeches were so entertaining, that Coolum club plans to hold a showcase night and invite those students to present them to club members.”

The Grade 10 course in Term 3 built on an equally successful Youth Leadership program with Grade 11 students in Term 2.

“The school principal’s vision is to run a three-year leadership program



ABOVE: B Williams (left) and Hari Kotrotsios (4th from left) with Ilona Josika at the Grade 10 graduation night in September.

at Coolum High, starting with Grade 10 students and continuing in Grades 11 and 12 to further build on their communication skills as potential school leaders.”

Hari was assisted by fellow Mercu-

rian B Williams, who had conducted Youth Leadership programs at the school for 10 years. Noosa club members Ilona Josika and Nita Taylor also contributed to the success of the Youth Leadership courses.



ABOVE: Vice President Membership Coral McVean (left) welcomes newest club members Patti and Gary Kuss, presented with the traditional laurel during their induction at the club’s September meeting. Gary (ACB, CL) and Patti (CC), both members of Islander Communicators, have been hardy Toastmasters for five years.

Diary dates

Saturday, 20 November

1.30pm for 2pm start
at Fairhill Nursery

Friday, 10 December

6.30pm for 7pm start
at Rydges Caloundra

January

Date & venue TBC

Saturday, 26 February

12pm for 12.30pm start
Tranquil Park, Maleny

Further details & RSVP:

j_a_mcconnell@hotmail.com

Students rehearse speeches

Brian and Jenny Duckworth were recently involved with two Speechcraft courses - one for university students and another for Montessori school students:

University of Sunshine Coast (USC) club runs a 5-week Speechcraft course at the beginning of each semester to help students gain the confidence to make presentations they need to give during their courses. "After completing Speechcraft, students are able to come to a club meeting and run through a presentation in front of our members and get some feedback which will help them give a really successful presentation," Jenny said. "The course we recently finished was memorable, as we had a student from Nepal doing post graduate studies. "He had never had to make oral presentations before, and when he saw us at Market Day, he immediately booked in to join the course. "He made incredible progress - he



USC Speakers Speechcraft course August -September: Brian and Jenny Duckworth (left). Area 22 Governor Guido Schouteten (kneeling) presented the Speechcrafters with their certificates on the final night of their course.

spoke very softly and quickly the first week, but once we explained how to speak more clearly, he became a different speaker. He said we will have helped him move from just getting a pass mark to hopefully a distinction." Jenny said another participant was a student with cerebral palsy. "Fran Kay worked with her and suggested she come along to the course. "Because of her cerebral palsy, her speech is difficult to understand. We suggested she give a copy of what she was saying to people. "This worked brilliantly, and she was much more relaxed, and everyone

understood her much more. "She thanked us and said it was great to feel included, not excluded. We all felt so humble, as it is so hard for her all the time. She really inspired all the other students too," Jenny said. Brian and Jenny also helped with a Speechcraft course at Montessori school for students attending a camp in the USA. "They practiced giving specific instructions to the group they would lead at the camp. This involved teaching them how to write and give procedural instructions clearly, step by step," Jenny said.



Budding horticulturalists grow presentation skills

Seven participants graduated from a six-week Speechcraft course held at the Mooloolah Native Nursery from June to July. The course was part of a five-month Green Army program for long-term unemployed people, designed to help them improve their communication skills when job-hunting. Coordinator Judith McConnell (left) was assisted by fellow Mercurians Muriel Smith, Hari Kotrotsios (3rd from left), and Kevin Wright, as well as members from Buderim and Kawana Waters clubs.

Communicating in the melting pot

As we cross the Arabian Sea near the southern tip of India (while I am listening to Queen's greatest hits), my mind casts back over the previous six weeks: travel does broaden the mind, especially when it comes to communication.

Communicating has been an interesting experience on the move, not so much internationally thanks to email, Skype and a Notebook in the pack - but face to face with the locals.

Sue and I found it reasonably easy due to being in tourist areas or where English is a second language.

Turkey and the back streets of Italy, when exploring on foot, challenged us at times.

The method we used most of the time was to use the simplest words possible, like conversing with a child, or practicing charades, gesturing, or a combination of these.

Simple things such as shopping in a supermarket, using local transport, or ordering at an out-of-the-way cafe were the most difficult, yet we survived.

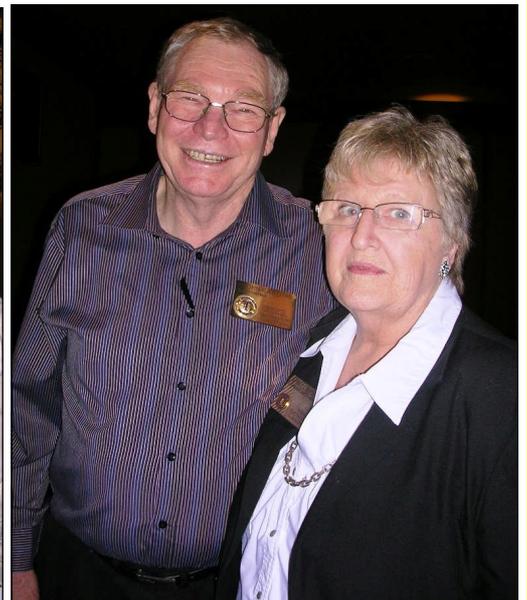
Sue carried a phrase book although this was of little use, as it didn't have the exact phrase needed, or took too much effort searching for the correct words, although it was handy when deciphering signs.

If there is message in this experience, it is: don't be too concerned, just ensure you make your return flight, and enjoy having your mind broadened.

- by Ian Pinker



Above: Club president Sue Kruger and Helene Ross enjoy the breathtaking views over Santorini island in Greece during their recent holiday. Below: Sunset over the Aegean.



Above left: Hugh McVean with Brian and Jenny Duckworth at the club's September meeting at Villa Noosa. Above right: John Kay and B Williams.

17,567 world ballots counted: three times

*Report from
International
Convention*

Convention always begins with a parade of flags of the countries which are registered with Toastmasters International. This year there were 113 flags, including Papua New Guinea. As District 69 has two clubs there now, John Kay proudly carried this flag.

District 70 Governor Philip Bendeich carried the Australian flag this year. The Australian Districts take it in turn to carry the Aussie flag, so and John will carry it next year when he is District Governor. It is a stirring ceremony which concludes with the USA national anthem.

There is also a first timers gathering with the International President.

This is also the time when there is an opportunity to meet the candidates who are standing for office. There were many roles this year as the International Directors for the odd-numbered regions were changing - the role of International Director is for 2 years. These members serve on the board of Toastmasters International, guiding policy and strategic planning and financial planning – a big role and prized by many who have aspirations to be a future International President.

Before the elections the Leadership Trio, District 69 Governor Bruce George, Lt Governor Education and Training John Kay and Lt Gov Marketing Charlie Starrett spent a considerable amount of time interviewing the candidates – most of the roles had at least one candidate so there were many decisions to make as to who they thought would be best suited to the role. All the Australians from D69 who were present and who were carrying proxies got together for discussion about each candidate.

The hottest contested role was for 2nd Vice President. There were four candidates standing for election; this role leads to International President in four years' time. The election took a couple of hours.



Just to give you an idea of numbers: 68.5% of the world clubs were represented – that meant there were 17,567 ballots available. A quorum was 4203 – there were more ballots than ever before owing to the electronic proxy being available. Each time there was a ballot all of those votes had to be counted.

The longest one was for the 2nd Vice President – the winning candidate needed 50% of the available ballot.

If, on the first count, no candidate received the required number – the one with the lowest number was dropped off the list and the count taken again. We did this three times until we were voting between two candidates. The winner was George Yen.

In addition, there is the Hall of Fame where the awards for the previous year are presented.

This is where our District was acknowledged as a Distinguished District, along with all of the others.

The prestigious Presidential Citation was also presented to Barrie Fuller DTM, a Past District 69 Governor, recognised for his continuing support of the District and the Toastmasters program.

Then there is the World Championship of Public Speaking contest. This year there were nine semi-finals, with nine con-

testants in each one, on the Thursday evening.

On Saturday afternoon the nine winners competed against each other with a new speech for the privilege of being the World Champion of Public Speaking. The competition was won by a young man David Henderson from Texas – he had many of us in tears as well as himself!

Also included is the President's Dinner Dance and The Golden Gavel dinner where someone from the USA is acknowledged for their contribution as a communicator.

And not to mention the many educational sessions.

It was a very interesting four days in a beautiful resort in a spectacular place in California, USA.

- by Fran Kay

We're on the web:

<http://mercurys.freetoasthost.info>

District 69 website:

www.toastmastersd69.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/ToastmastersD69

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