



Hello Toastmasters!

Due to the rapidly evolving spread of Covid-19, and the resulting concern for the well-being of all of our members, there will be several changes to Toastmasters activities in District 52.

As many of you have heard from your employers and on the news, people are being advised to stay home as much as possible. Larger meetings (250+) are prohibited now after Governor Newsom's executive order.

Here is what is changing for District 52: (Contest and Meetings)

Contests:

All contests scheduled for March are being re-scheduled, and will change format.

- Area or Division contests are shifting to a different model – re-scheduled, not cancelled.. Many international Districts have already shifted to a Virtual format, with great success.
- District 52's contests are also shifting to Virtual.
- You will get details of how that works, and the re-scheduled dates, within a week. Our target date (not firm yet) is for Virtual contests on March 28-29. If you are a contestant or judge, please save those dates.
- Contest organizers (Area Directors) will get advice on what software to use. They are generally free.
- There will be training and a webinar to show you how to participate. For a judge or audience member, that is easy – just log into the software. Generally, you will need a laptop, tablet or a desktop with a video camera. If you are a contestant and if you don't have that, please ask your friends or family.
- Contestants will be briefed in advance on video rules
- A separate email will be sent with all the details, within a week.

Toastmaster Meetings

The decision on whether or not to hold a regular meeting rests with the club members and officers. However, in the interests of members' health and their concerns, District 52 encourages you to shift temporarily to a Virtual format.

- An email will be sent from Program Quality Director with options available for low or no cost.

Corporate clubs should ask their IT people – the company probably has already figured this out for their own meetings.

Yes, it has been tested – Toastmasters clubs in China, Japan, and parts of Europe have been holding successful Virtual club meetings.

We are working on a webinar and training to show you how to do that – you will have it within the week.

Depending on where your club meets, you may have no choice – for example, fire station community rooms are closed for now.

How long will this last?

No one knows for sure, but at least until March 31. According to Dr Fauci, the head of the NIH (National Institute of Health), and the most-often quoted and interviewed medical expert, the projection right now is that the virus may take 4-5 weeks to abate. Many venues announced closure to March 31, but that may change.

In summary:

Immediately, and for the short term

- Contest are re-scheduled (date TBA).
- Toastmasters clubs make their own decisions.
- Contest will be conducted in a Virtual mode.
- Training webinars and software advice will be made available within the week to all clubs.

These decisions have been made by the District Executive Committee (DEC), which includes all the Area Directors and the Division Directors as well as the District Director, Program Quality Director, and Club Growth Director..

On the optimistic side –

According to the UN's WHO (World Health Organization), there seems to be a bell-curve chart of new cases – first they build up, reach a peak, and then subside. In China, there were 3,800 new daily cases on Feb 4th, but only 139 on March 4, and only 8 cases yesterday. Apple has now re-opened their 17 stores in China. Disneyland China has re-opened. Japan has experienced a similar course.

Let's hope that cases in the US follow a similar curve, and that we soon get to the right side of the curve.

Also on the news today, a new testing method has just been approved, from the pharma company Roche, that can be made widely available and gives an answer within 4 hours. The more we can test more quickly, the more control we will have.

Panic is not a strategy!

Stay healthy, be well, and take care of your family.

District 52 Leadership



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