



From left: District 52 Governor Peter Geissler, Civil Engineering Associate III Chelsea Li and Division D Governor Robert O'Donnell.

Make 'em Laugh

■ **Public Works Toastmasters compete in division- and district-wide humorous reading contests.**

Story by Yvonne Liu, Personnel, and Toastmasters Member
Photos courtesy Toastmasters



PUBLIC WORKS — Have you ever thought that your spouse could be the inspiration to an award winning speech? Bureau of Engineering's Civil Engineering Associate III Chelsea Li did just that.

On Oct. 21, her speech titled "My Gifted Husband" represented the Public Works Pioneers Toastmasters in the Toastmasters International Division D Humorous Speech Contest. Management Analyst II Elvia Magallon of CDD represented the LA Sparkplugs Club in the Table Topics Contest.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit, worldwide organization that helps its members to develop their public speaking skills and leadership skills. It holds speech contests twice a year in various subjects. Contestants must compete at individual club levels before entering subsequently larger contests. Both City employee clubs—LA Sparkplugs Club and Public Works Pioneers Toastmasters—belong to Division D in the Downtown Los Angeles area. Chelsea and Elvia had distinguished themselves among dozens of clubs in the Downtown Los Angeles area to reach the Division D contest.

Out of the three contestants for the Table Topics Contest and three for Humorous Speech Contest, Chelsea and Elvia had each only two years as Toastmaster members. They competed fearlessly against seasoned Toastmasters and veteran contest winners including David Draper of the MTA Club, Beatrice Boise of the First Braille Club and David Berkowitz of the Transamerica Toastmasters.

Table Topics is the impromptu speech portion. If you would like to try the Table Topics yourself, what would your 2.5-minute answer to this question be: "Television is calling. You have been selected to appear on one of the following reality shows: Survivor, The Apprentice or Fear Factor. Which one would you choose?" David Berkowitz, who has been an active Toastmaster member for more than

15 years, came in first, and Elvia, a relative novice, carried home the second place trophy.

For Elvia, the best part of her membership is the opportunities to connect with fellow City employees and the closeness that comes with the association. She said, "I especially like that it has made me a confident speaker. I recommend Toastmasters to all people because it will contribute to their future success in any endeavors."

Whereas the first two prepared humorous speeches of five to seven minutes didn't even get an audible chuckle, Chelsea's speech shook the room with laughter. She conjured up hilarious images of her husband with Tom Cruise's height and Sigmund Freud's therapy skills. She took home the Division golden first place trophy.

At the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, Chelsea was the only Pioneer to have made it so far to the District 52 Contest, to be held Nov. 5. Although she didn't come home with the District trophy, she said, "My membership in Toastmasters is the engine to keep me going. What I have learned about my contest experience is now I know what a good speech is and how to make a good one brilliant. I am working on another one now."

Isn't it time for you to visit the Toastmasters? The Public Works Pioneers Toastmasters Club meets each Wednesday at noon at 650 S. Spring St. in the 12th floor's Giannini Room. Guests are always welcome. Membership is inexpensive, educational and fun.



From left: District 52 Governor Peter Geissler, Management Analyst II Elvia Magallon and Division D Governor Robert O'Donnell.

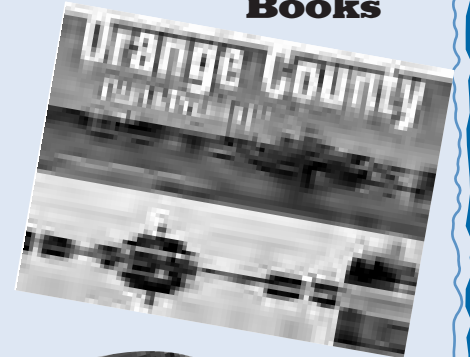
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