



Area B4

Division B

District 33

Serving West Ventura County

Since my first Gaucho Toastmasters meeting at UCSB in 2005, I've been a member off and on for the last twelve years, and am here to stay. I'm excited to call Ventura Toastmasters, Club 24 (aka "The Fun Club") my home base.

For this coming year, my goal is for every club that's achieved Select or better to become President's Distinguished, or alternatively to finish a tier or higher over last year. And for those newer, smaller clubs, to build their member base to charter strength. To this end, we'll cross-pollinate the best ideas from the District and other Area clubs in pursuit of this goal. And for those clubs still working toward their base, we'll use the Distinguished Club Program as a framework for empowering each member to maximize their Toastmaster experience for their own personal growth . . . Distinguished status notwithstanding.

In my own experience, Toastmasters has helped sharpen my own speaking and prioritizing in networking events and business meetings. For example, about a year ago when a scheduled ten-minute speaker couldn't make it to a local networking meeting, another two copy writers and I organized an impromptu panel discussion on the differences between types of writing and editing services; this kind of experience grows out of the club experience such as enlisting the Jokemaster to serve double duty as Timer when needed five minutes before the Sergeant at Arms drops the gavel for the meeting start. Too, in working with writers, I've often mentioned to author clients the technique of finding their general and specific purpose for their piece of writing—tools expressed better in Project Two of the Communication and Leadership Manual than some other writing books I've come across.

Which leads to my day job outside the club: I am an editor and publishing consultant with Polaris Author Services, where we provide editing, design and launch support for authors publishing their print and e-book on Amazon and other platforms.

Ben Swihart, ACB, CL

Area B4 Director