

Presentation Pros February 12, 2018 meeting recap

Dear Presentation Pros members:

We had a great meeting last Monday, with 12 members in attendance. We also had three guests: Jo and Kate, who were attending their first Toastmasters meeting and Joseph Skoda, our current Division E Director.

We used a different table configuration during the meeting as the tables were set up boardroom style in lengthwise fashion facing the screen when we arrived - it was fun for a change but we unanimously agreed that our usual format works better as it provides a larger stage for speakers.

Martina opened the meeting by warmly welcoming the guests and reminding us about the area contest on Saturday March 24. She asked for volunteers to represent our club in the Table Topics and International contests and I believe Melissa and Steve agreed to represent us.

Steve was our Toastmaster and introduced the meeting theme of "Dogs". He told us about Gracie, a dog who works for ARF (Animal + Reading = Fun), an innovative literacy program that allows elementary school students to improve their reading skills by reading aloud to specially trained therapy dogs.

Grace shared opening words by telling us about the 27 dogs she has lived with in her life. She listed the name of every single one, including her favorite, Willy, who was her "heart dog".

Carol Saucedo gave the speaking tip. She reminded us that once we set the stage, for example by pointing to the right of the stage for the location of the kitchen, it's important to remember to keep referring to this same stage location during our speech to avoid confusing the audience.

Randy was the first speaker and gave a speech entitled "How loud is loud" from the Speaking to Inform manual, the Abstract Concept. He explained the trend in recent decades for music to have more compression, i.e. when comparing the loudness of notes in songs from the 70s to those in songs of today, today's songs are loud from beginning to end and don't have the rich modulations typical in songs from earlier decades. He introduced music clips in his slides, which allowed him to illustrate this point very effectively.

I was the second speaker and my speech was entitled "What's not to love about hugs" from the CC manual, Research Your Topic. I presented the results of my in-depth research on the benefits of hugging and explained the science behind how hugging works its magic. I also provided general tips for optimal hugging and uncovered the existence of "National Hugging Day" on January 21, but emphasized that every day is a good day for a hug!

Ron was the third speaker and gave us a fascinating and fast-paced PowerPoint on everything we didn't know about dogs but really should. His presentation was also meant to demonstrate the effective use of PowerPoint – he used an all-black background throughout and brought our attention to certain points on the slides by highlighting them and leaving the rest of the text and images in lighter font. He closed with a poignant quote from Will Rogers "If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went."

Carol Gemberling Stewart led a heartfelt discussion about how dogs (and pets in general) can contribute to a person's well-being. We learned about the benefits of therapy dogs and service dogs and the real difference they can make to help people heal and feel better. We also learned that not everyone has had a pleasant experience with dogs and that some prefer cats over dogs or are simply not pet people.

Michael stepped in as first time General Evaluator and invited Joseph, Alyce, Larry, and Grace to provide praise and constructive comments to each speaker, which they each did with the participation of the audience.

Last but not least, Larry impersonated Andy Rooney with uncanny precision and told us emphatically how he utterly dislikes the fact that people kiss their dogs!!

Secretarially yours,

Marie