

WHAT GOES ON AT HALTON HILLS TOASTMASTERS? I ATTENDED A MEETING TO FIND OUT

IT'S DIFFICULT TO QUIETLY GO UNNOTICED AT A HALTON HILLS TOASTMASTERS MEETING, VERONICA APPIA WRITES



VERONICA APPIA
Column

It's difficult to quietly go unnoticed at a Halton Hills Toastmasters meeting.

I dropped in Monday evening, relatively unannounced, hoping I could sneak in, get a spot somewhere in the back and shoot some photos.

Instead, as soon as I creaked the door open to enter the area in the back of St. Alban the Martyr Church, in Glen Williams, I was

greeted by just about everyone in the room.

Cheryl Bates, the vice-president of education, began digging through a large bin and pulled out a blank name card and whiteboard marker, placing them both in front of me. Before I could even say thank you, Toastmaster Brenda LaRose handed me a glass of water, then sat back down beside me.

"You'll need this for the toast," she said.

It was a night of inclement weather, roads were icy, and the room that usually hosts about 24 people on

Monday evenings held just about half that, with members filling in for the roles of those who could not attend.

The club, which began in Halton Hills 35 years ago, is a branch of the non-profit educational organization Toastmasters International. It gives members the tools to improve their public speaking abilities, overall confidence and leadership skills, with weekly practice and support from fellow members.

I sat down, and the meeting ensued, with a greeting, call to order, confirmation of the agenda and, of course, the toast.

Then there is a portion on the agenda where newcomers to the group, myself included, are invited to say a little something about



Veronica Appia/Metroland

Halton Hills Toastmasters from left to right: Dong Zhu, Rob Pillar, Corwin Wills, Brenda LaRose, Cheryl Bates, Qamar Khawaja, Everett Lukacs, Gabrielle Ching-Johnson and Michael Lockwood.

themselves.

I introduced myself and specified the purpose for my visit: I'm a journalist. I work for the Independent and Free Press. I'm looking to write a story - the typical introduction. I thought I was done. But that wouldn't be the last time I would stand up and speak.

After introducing the word of the week (this week's word was conviviality), which the group is en-

couraged to try to use in their speeches throughout the evening, they began an activity called Table Topics.

Normally, during Table Topics, one person is given a word or phrase and has one minute to prepare a speech about it. They then have between 30 seconds and one minute to deliver that speech to the group, while being timed by a person taking on the role of the timer for the evening.

This week, the group decided to shake things up and give everyone an opportunity to speak for a minute (if they wanted to), including me.

The word was "commitment."

I rambled on about my cats (I promise it was relevant), before sitting down, thinking, "What the heck did I just say?"

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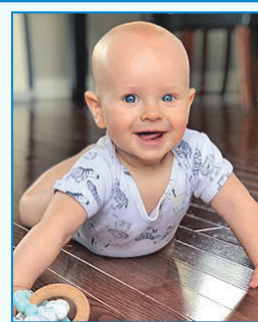
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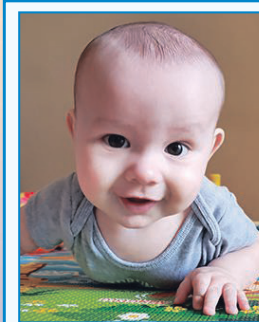
Khloe Mila Snow
January 5, 2018



Brady Philip Hyland
January 13, 2018



Andrew Alexander Fraser
January 25, 2018



Jack Dylan Taylor
April 2, 2018



Madison Jessica Jolly
May 26, 2018



Nicolas Cameron Estrada
October 26, 2018



Ayva Elizabeth Barry & Audrey Rose Barry
October 31, 2018



Braylyn Harley Marian Cowen
November 14, 2018