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Local Toastmasters club kicked off 2011 Humorous Speech Contest

Winners chosen from **Bentonville** will represent **Pinnacle Toastmasters Club** in the next round

BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS, September 8, 2011 — **Pinnacle Toastmasters Club** joined more than 13,000 Toastmasters clubs from around the world participating in the 2011 Toastmasters International Humorous Speech Contest this month. The contest, took place on Wednesday, September 7. Mark Thrash won in the Humorous Speech division, and Carrie Perrien-Smith took top honors in the Table Topics division. Mark and Carrie will advance to the next level of competition, the Area B-2 contest, to be held at the Jones Center in Springdale, Arkansas, on September 24. Area B-2 includes clubs from all of Northwest Arkansas, from Fort Smith to Bella Vista. The public is invited to attend. If either Mark or Carrie is unable to compete in the Area B-2 Contest, the second place winners, Barbara Pinson-Lash and Jenise Walters, respectively, will compete in their place.

"I joined Toastmasters to improve my communications skills," says Mark Thrash, Pinnacle club's 2011 Humorous speech contest winner. "Everyone in Toastmasters is there for the same purpose, to develop good communication and leadership skills. The support from other members made the contest fun, and I am very thankful to everyone in my club for encouraging me."

The Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contest is one of two rounds of competition Toastmasters International holds each year. The larger competition, the International Speech Contest, begins in the spring and culminates in the crowning of a World Champion of Public Speaking at the annual Toastmasters International Convention in August. The Humorous Speech contest begins at the club level in the early fall and proceeds to the Area contests, the Division Contests, and finally, to the District Contests in October.

The winners of the Area B-2 competition will go on to compete in the Division B contest, to be held in Little Rock on October 8. Finally, winners from that contest will go on to compete in the District 43 contest which will be held in Northwest Arkansas October 21-22, 2011. District 43 serves Toastmasters from western Tennessee, northern Mississippi, and all of Arkansas. With the recent closing of the venue originally booked for the District 43 Conference, the new location for the conference and contest will be announced on the District's web site at www.district43toastmasters.org.

"Giving speeches in a Toastmasters club is great practice," says Carrie Smith, Table Topics Division winner, "but competing in a speech contest takes that experience to the next level. In a contest, you have the added pressure and anxiety to perform. It really gives me the experience and confidence I need for those high-pressure, real-life situations that happen in business."

To enter the contest, a person must be an active member of Toastmasters. All participant speeches must be original, presented in English and last five to seven minutes. Judging criteria include originality, speech content, organization, voice quality, gestures and audience reaction.

See interviews with Toastmasters 2011 World Champion of Public Speaking, Jock Elliott, along with highlights of the past winning speeches on Toastmasters' YouTube channel at

[youtube.com/user/Toastmasters](https://www.youtube.com/user/Toastmasters). For more information about Toastmasters International contests, please visit [toastmasters.org/contest](https://www.toastmasters.org/contest).

Pinnacle Toastmasters Club meets at Clement Financial Services, on C Street in Bentonville, on Wednesdays at 12:00 noon. To learn more, please visit <http://pinnacle.freetoasthost.org/>

About Toastmasters

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has more than 270,000 members in over 13,000 clubs in 116 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people of all backgrounds become more confident in front of an audience. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please **visit [toastmasters.org](https://www.toastmasters.org)**.

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For inclusion at your discretion:



L-R: Barbara Pinson-Lash, 2nd Place, Mark Thrash, 1st Place in Humorous Speech Division



L-R: Jenise Walters, 2nd Place, Carrie Perrien-Smith, 1st Place in Table Topics Division