

The official Newsletter of
Toastmasters International
NIT Trichy



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE



**Speak up.
Believe in yourself.
Take risks.**

EBULLIENCE

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EDITOR'S REMARKS

TM SAMRIDDHO

This newsletter was something I was eagerly looking forward to since the day I became VPPR. Having been the person in chair for the previous newsletter, I already had some experience and was confident I would handle it pretty easily.

But this year the time for making the newsletter came early as we have to make 2 editions, one in December and one in April. It brought along new challenges, pushing me to the edge and making me realize what a gigantic task this was. I would like to thank all the people who helped me achieve completing this, starting from our President TM Angad, my mentor TM Kratika, and all the people who contributed in every possible way. I'm proud to showcase all the wonderful talents that our club holds, and am amazed at the same time.

One person who deserves a special mention is TM Jayendran without whose support none of this would have been possible. His systematic approach and his habit of getting things done at the right time helped this jigsaw puzzle fall into place.

It has been a pleasure working on this newsletter. I sincerely hope this finds you in good health and get set for a fun ride ahead!

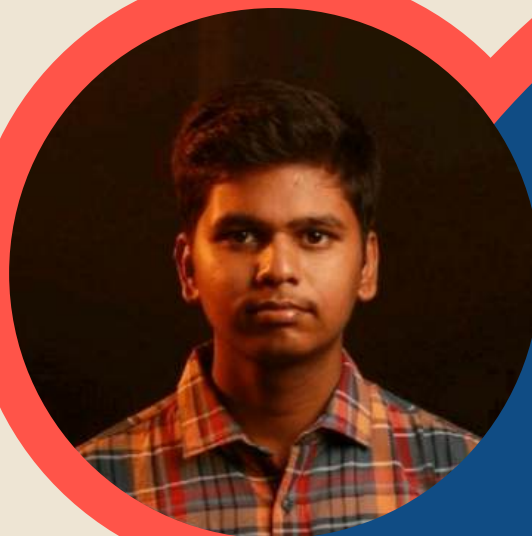


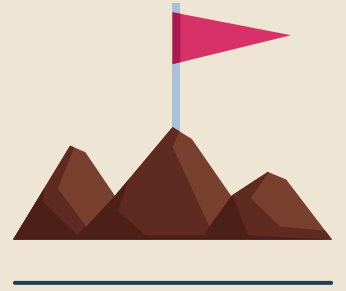
TM JAYENDRAN

Chairing the club newsletter has always been on my checklist since my first year in the club. So, when our VPPR TM Samriddho asked for chair, I readily accepted. When I got to read the first article, it made me realize how many multi-faceted members the club had under the umbrella of public speakers; how much TMI NITT has achieved in the past six months. Hence, I envisioned this newsletter as such - a fascinating highlight of the club, its members, and their journey in the best possible fashion.

Working with TM Samriddho has been a great learning opportunity for me and this newsletter wouldn't be as ebullient as it is now, without his creativity. I would like to thank TM Angad and all the other ExCom officers for their unending support. I would also like to thank each and every member who contributed to the newsletter, even in the smallest way.

Working on this was an enthralling ride for me and I hope it will be an enthralling read for you.





MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY

RICHER WITH EXPERIENCE

Area Director's Address



**TM KRATIKA
CHATUVERDI**

Area Director, F4

19th time. I was frantically messaging Toastmasters that I have never known before for the role of the chief judge for the Area Contest. Some were corporate employees, some owned their own companies and some were consultants and career coaches. Only commonality - Toastmasters. Frankly, I was skeptical as to how far that will help. I thought one needed to know someone on a personal basis for negotiation, to begin with. Even if it's just brushing shoulders in any event - an opportunity I found myself deprived of due to online mode. To be fair, everyone was polite but polite in expressing their grief to take up the role, which was consoling, true, but not helpful at that moment. However, a few referred me to other people. So, it became like a chain. I'd ask a person, that person would refer me to someone else, that someone else to some other, and sometimes, that some other would refer me back to a person I had already asked and was turned down by. It was a vicious cycle.

Till the 15th attempt, I held my ground. If someone said they couldn't take it up, I was still optimistic that someone else will. But after the 15th, I understood that now what I needed was help. So, I first messaged the Program Quality Director (PQD) since she once told me that I can reach out to her if I needed any help. She instantly recommended me to someone. Along with giving me names of people to go to, she added, "While requesting, you can also mention that I was the one who referred you."

At first, I was a bit hesitant, but on account of the situation I was in, I did as I was told. On my 19th attempt, I met Reena mam, who initially said they couldn't take up the role as she's already doing a contest the same morning. This time, I did something I had not done so far. I asked her if I adjust the timing of the contest, will it be possible to manage. Negotiation begins. After some more discussion, I finally got a chief judge. And the past district chief judge on top of that.

You might now want to say, Kratika, it'd have been better had you reached out to the PQD and Reena mam first. To that, I would only reply that this was the best route. You see, now I have those 18 people, from various walks of life, whom I know. And since I have already reached out to them once, I would be able to ask for help more freely the next time. If needed, I will also be able to extend help in some way or the other. To break the tall barrier of the first conversation is always a tough task. It is awkward - no doubt. But it paves the way for the next. After that day, I received requests from a few of them to be judges in the contests where they were the chief judge. This mutual help is what makes a network. And trust me, it isn't easy to make. But it's people that make you richer at the end of the day. Rich with experience of working with a diverse set of people.

"To break the tall barrier of the first conversation is always a tough task. It is awkward - no doubt. But it paves the way for the next....

It's the people that make you richer at the end of the day. Rich with experience of working with a diverse set of people"



TMI NIT TRICHY

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

TM ANGAD

There are two benefits of taking up an excom role in Toastmasters. Firstly, you are bestowed with an opportunity to lead and take the club to the next level. Secondly, you embark on a journey of self-exploration. You get to know more about yourself. You will be pushed outside your comfort zone and face intense situations, but genuine diamonds are made only in these high-pressure situations. And there will be a moment where you will realize that something changed in you through this journey. My moment of change came before one of our meets this semester.

Before our meet 203 on the 4th of August, I felt butterflies in my stomach. This sensation was reminiscent of my icebreaker speech, and I haven't felt this since then (except for contests :)). It's funny because I was not going to give a speech that day. It took me a while to understand. I was worried not because of my address or role. I was concerned if the meet would go well if the members would enjoy the meet, if the speakers would deliver their speeches well. That's when I realized, "I" was no longer the main thought in my mind; the "club and its members" were.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

How did I overcome these jitters?

I understood two things. Firstly, I have the entire excom with me to help organize meets. Every single one of them has grown so much in these few months. I'm a little spoiled to have such an awesome excom, but it only motivates me to work harder in taking the club to new heights. The second thing I realized was that no matter what happens in the meet, it's my responsibility to understand and assist every member in any way I can.

I have always wondered that it's been several years since the inception of our club. We have had over two hundred meetings and in each of those meets, we have had the same set of roles. It's common to think that we may have exhausted the possibilities of each role. However, every meet I see someone take up the same role but with their own creativity, they perform it in a way we have never seen before. That's kudos to every member of our club. The effort and time each of them put in, pushes our club towards excellence.

We may shift to offline meetings in our next semester. That will be a significant change to adapt to because we have become used to the online platform. I feel that we have increased our presence with the help of online meets. We are no longer a club recognized only in NIT Trichy but one recognized in all of Tamil Nadu. With the spirit of collaboration and challenging ourselves, I'm sure that all of us will be able to adapt smoothly and enjoy in-person meets even more.





LOOK BACK

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY

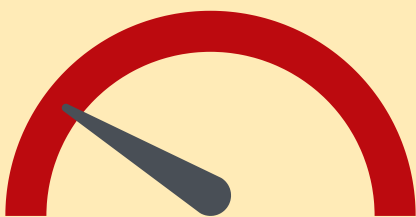
CLUB DCP REPORT



**38 Members (To
date)
with base of 42**



**6 new members
inducted**

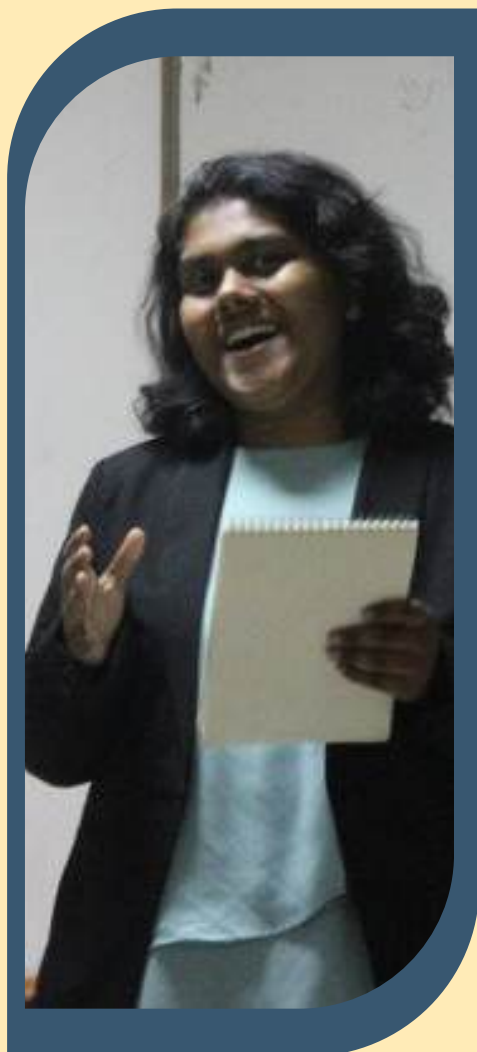


**2 DCP Goals
achieved**



**Membership renewal
on-time + Club officer list
on-time**

PATHWAYS ACHIEVEMENT



TM Merlin
Level 3
Presentation Mastery



TM Vinodini
Level 1
Dynamic Leadership

MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

TM Swastik

**Outstanding
Toastmaster of the
Month (August)**
District 120



TM Merlin

Member Award –
Excellence in Leadership
Area F4, District 120



CLUB CALENDAR

July 2021

**ExCom
Prom**

Installation ceremony for the club ExCom of 2021-22;
First meet of the term took place the next day, where members of previous ExCom recounted their experiences.

First joint meet with
Colossus Toastmasters club

**Skip
Ads**

August 2021

**Cricket
World
Cup**

First AD visit

CCD

Educational session on
Evaluation by **TM Anirudh**

September 2021

CLUB CALENDAR

Stardust

Educational session on Humorous Speech by **DTM Jayan Narayanan**

TMI NIT Trichy Club Contest

TMI NIT Trichy's Humorous and Evaluation Contest

I wish I had that idea

Second joint meet with Colossus Toastmasters club; First meet of 6 newly inducted club members.

September 2021

One small step for man

2 new members delivered their icebreakers in the division-level Icebreaker marathon.

CLUB CALENDAR

October 2021

Exuberance

4 contestants represented TMI NITT in Area F4 Humorous Speech and Evaluation contest.

2 contestants from TMI NIT Trichy competed in Division level Humorous Speech and Evaluation contest.

FabN'21

Sangfroid

Third joint meet with DXC DLF Toastmasters club

November 2021

December 2021

Toasties' Party

Buddy club special event conducted with Trichy Toastmasters club



CLUB ACTIVITIES

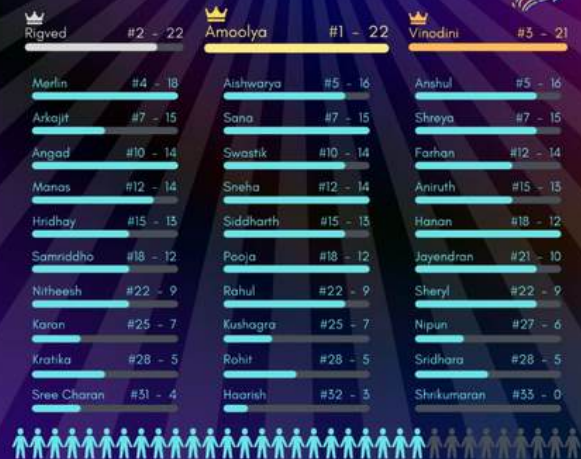


TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY



ACTIVITY POINTS LEADERBOARD

AUGUST 2021



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY



ACTIVITY POINTS LEADERBOARD

SEPTEMBER 2021



TM ANGAD
70454 87486

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

TM SAMRIDDHO
89024 27440

TM ANGAD
70454 87486

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

TM SAMRIDDHO
89024 27440



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY



ACTIVITY POINTS LEADERBOARD

OCTOBER 2021



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY



ACTIVITY POINTS LEADERBOARD

MARKING SCHEME

ACTIVITY	POINTS
Speaker	8
TMOD	7
GE	6
TTE	6
TTM	5
Evaluator	5
TAGL	4
TT Speaker	2
Attendance	1
Special Badge awarded for roles taken up outside the club meets	★

"Revisiting our **New Marking Scheme and Badges** catered to appreciate all your valuable efforts, and welcoming all the new names to the list. Keep rocking and Happy Toastmastering!"

-TMI Excom'21

TM ANGAD
70454 87486

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

TM SAMRIDDHO
89024 27440

TM ANGAD
70454 87486

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

TM SAMRIDDHO
89024 27440

INTRODUCING ACTIVITY POINTS



Since 1924





THINK AND SP

Club 9623849

Colorado Springs,

HUMOROUS SPEECH & EVALUATIONS CONTEST

SEP 26 | 2.00 PM TO 5.00 PM



TM ANGAD 70454 87486

TM AISHWARYA 97909 20020

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY

HUMOROUS SPEECH CONTEST

WINNERS!



2ND PLACE
TM RIGVED



1ST PLACE
TM POOJA



3RD PLACE
TM SAMRIDHO



Since 1924

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS!

TMI NIT TRICHY CHAPTER

EVALUATION CONTEST

WINNERS!



2ND PLACE
TM ANSHUL



1ST PLACE
TM SNEHA



3RD PLACE
TM SHERYL



Since 1924

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS!

TMI NIT TRICHY CHAPTER

CLUB CONTESTS



SPEECH OF THE MONTH

MEET 210

TM HRIDHAY'S STARDUST

WORD OF THE DAY INCHOATE

Just begun and so, not fully formed or developed

Example: Despite his dream being inchoate, he succeeded in getting the highest paid intern

Toastmaster of the Day TM Hridhay
General Evaluator TM Kratika
Timer TM Shreya
Ah-Counter TM Anshul
Grammarians TM Arkajit
Listener TM Pooja

22nd September, 2021

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

TM HRIDHAY'S STARDUST

TM Swastik, the SAA, commenced the meeting and stated the mission and code of Toastmasters.

The President, TM Angad, took over and greeted the guests and members, and introduced the Toastmaster of the Day, TM Hridhay.

TM Hridhay introduced the theme for the day "Stardust". He expressed his awe for cosmic phenomenon and explained the science behind how a star is born.

The GE and the LTAG team introduced their roles.

This was followed by the prepared speech session

TM Sheryl	Among Us	TM Sheryl narrated her past experiences with leadership roles and how they helped her to identify her best suited leadership style.
TM Samridhho	What's the Time?	TM Samridhho discussed his time management strategy called "The Critical Pressure" strategy. He narrated an experience where he was forced to think outside the box under the difficult time constraints.

22nd September, 2021

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

EDUCATIONAL SESSION: HUMOROUS SPEECHES

-DTM Jayan Narayanan

- Analyse the ballot and work on what is being given weightage.
- Spontaneous Humour is appreciated greatly, but to be spontaneous, one must constantly observe their surroundings. Observing helps you to come up with creative jokes and scenarios.
- Self-deprecating Humour almost always works. Find one unique joke you can crack about yourself.
- Humour is a perspective. Narrative, in terms of delivery is very important. Any serious situation can be turned into a funny story if you add the drama and narrate it well.
- Instead of going with a straightforward approach, try to approach your story from a different angle.
- "Pregnant Pauses" is an important element in humorous speeches. Pregnant pauses allows the audience to consume the content, process it and then laugh.
- Set your jokes into categories, take feedback from different audiences and adjust your humour accordingly.
- Laughing at your own jokes helps you gather an "absurd confidence" to participate in contests.
- Half your potential is caged when you worry about what others will think about you, instead be shameless, but "decently shameless".
- Laughter is Contagious. If at least one person laughs at your jokes, everyone will laugh along.



Enjoy your life, that is more important than any damn thing in life because
"Kal Ho Naa Ho"

- DTM JAYAN NARAYANAN

22nd September, 2021

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

The General Evaluator, TM Hanan took over to conduct the evaluation session.

TM Shreya, TM Anshul and TM Arkajit gave detailed TAG reports with valuable suggestions. The TAG team reports were followed by a fun quiz session conducted by the Listener, TM Pooja.

GENERAL EVALUATOR'S TIP

Use the Sandwich Technique to evaluate speeches. In this technique, we sandwich the recommendations between commendations. It is recommended to have at least two commendations, two recommendations and finally conclude with something that stood out to you the most.

The President, TM Angad announced the winners and adjourned the meet.

TM HRIDHAY'S STARDUST

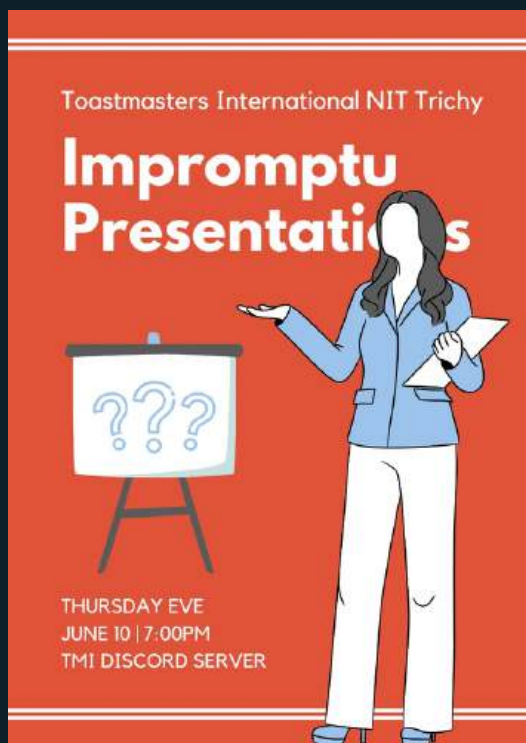
Best Speaker	TM Samridhho
Best LTAG Role	TM Pooja
Best Roleplayer	TM Hridhay

22nd September, 2021

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

MINUTES OF A MEET



MOVIE NIGHTS AND GAMES

tmi nit trichy

Toastmasters NITT Chapter
86 subscribers

HOME VIDEOS PLAYLISTS CHANNELS ABOUT

Uploads SORT BY

TM Anshul's epic introduction | Meet Miniclips#3
TM Rigved | 2nd Place Area Level | Humorous Speech...
"Awkward Intros" | #JustPresiThings | Meet...
TM Harshidaa | 1st Place Area Level | Humorous...
"TV Flex" | TM Anshul | Meet Miniclips#1

TMI's Server

server-tour This will help you give a bird's eye view of the server !

Rigved 05/23/2021
WELCOME :

- [# read-me-first](#) - All the rules of this server are mentioned here, make sure to follow each of them.
- [# self-roles](#) - Please react to emojis to get roles which are based on your interest.
- [# announcements](#) - All the announcements and updates regarding any events like : Movie Night, Gaming Hours, Talent Hunt, Karaoke, Debate Comp, Chess Tournament and so on will be made here, along with important server updates.
- [# server-suggestions](#) - If you have any suggestions regarding improvement of the system of the server, please write it here.

DISCUSSIONS :

- [# chit-chat](#) - Informal talk here.
- [# books-club](#) - Discuss about different books here
- [# academia](#) - Ask your doubts about any department or domain, or vent out your academic frustrations here
- [# travel-adventure](#) - Discussion about travel journeys is done here.
- [# manga-anime](#) - Like reading manga or watch Anime...Come here
- [# memes](#) - Have some funny unseen pics of TMI members. Share it with us too.
- [# random-epiphanies](#) - Discussion about random thoughts of life.
- [# pets](#) - Are you fan of cats, dogs and rats then share the cute photos here.
- [# level-up-command](#) - The more you participate in this server, higher you are ranked in the leader board and you move onto next levels. Use bot commands related to checking level and rank.

Conversations
VC's for in general chill convos

Message # server-tour

Humans: 44

WELCOME

[# welcome](#)

[# server-tour](#)

[# read-me-first](#)

[# self-roles](#)

[# announcements](#)

[# server-suggestions](#)

DISCUSSION

[# chit-chat](#)

Riddho #2018

Active

YOUTUBE AND DISCORD CHANNEL



DISCORD SESSIONS

By Webmaster TM Rigved

What only good the pandemic has done to us is it has brought every one of us (almost) closer, at least digitally. Whether you like it or not, all communications in the past 30 months have been nothing but through the internet, of which texting has been the primary way of conveying any sort of message. Though it brings in fast exchanges of words with your friends, the real emotion and the nuance in a conversation are just lost. Also, as if constantly texting people was ever a good idea anyway!

" In this vague online world that we live in, where everyone seems to be available, but nobody seems to be actually talking to each other "

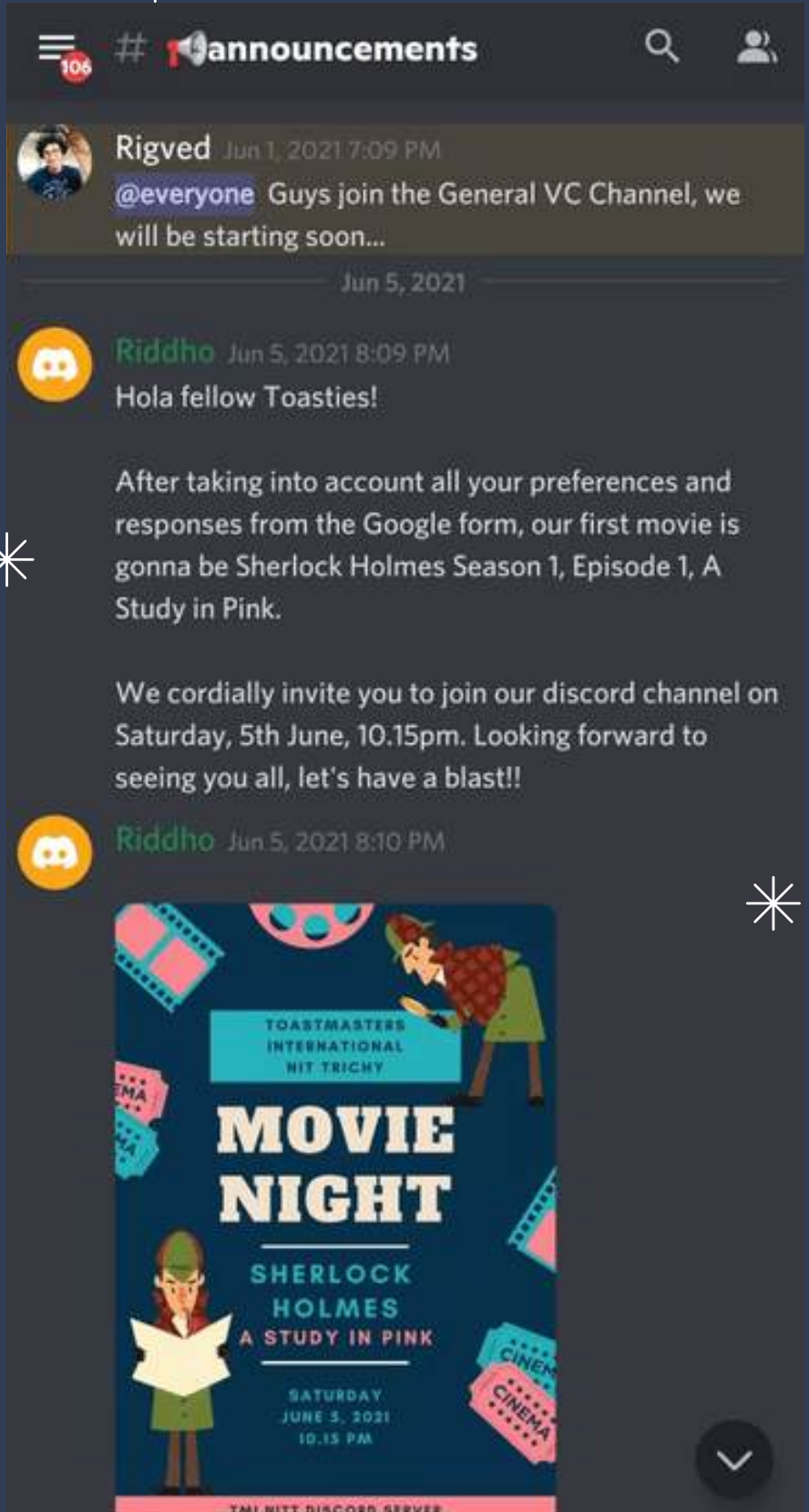
That has been the exact reason to start a new discord server for our club!

Toastmasters is a reputed organization and embodies the virtues of discipline and professionalism. But in the end, we need to recognize...who are we?

A bunch of college kids....figuring our own goals, helping each other out through thick and thin, and literally being second-hand parents to each other. And for that, what is most imperative is to socialize amongst the members of the club, develop the comradery between the members, and understand and be empathetic to each one's psyche, which I feel Toastmasters needs to emphasize more on.



"INVESTING TIME TO BOND WITH PEOPLE, BRINGS NOTHING BUT COMPOUNDING INTERESTS IN FUTURE"
- RIGVED, JUST NOW





Now when you are able to achieve all of this, what next will materialize is a huge change in mindset while attending the meets. For example, now when a member goes onto speak, you will not only care about the speech but more about the person giving the speech and have a certain context of where is he or she is coming from, it's like adding that extra +0.5 number lens after you go for an eye check-up after a very long time, it just makes things unnecessarily more clearer to you. Having now known the person inside-out, so much so that you understand their certain nuances, style, mannerism, and personality which brings in a whole new perspective while listening to or evaluating the speaker. In addition to that, the familiarity of the speaker with the audience naturally helps them to let go of their inhibitions.

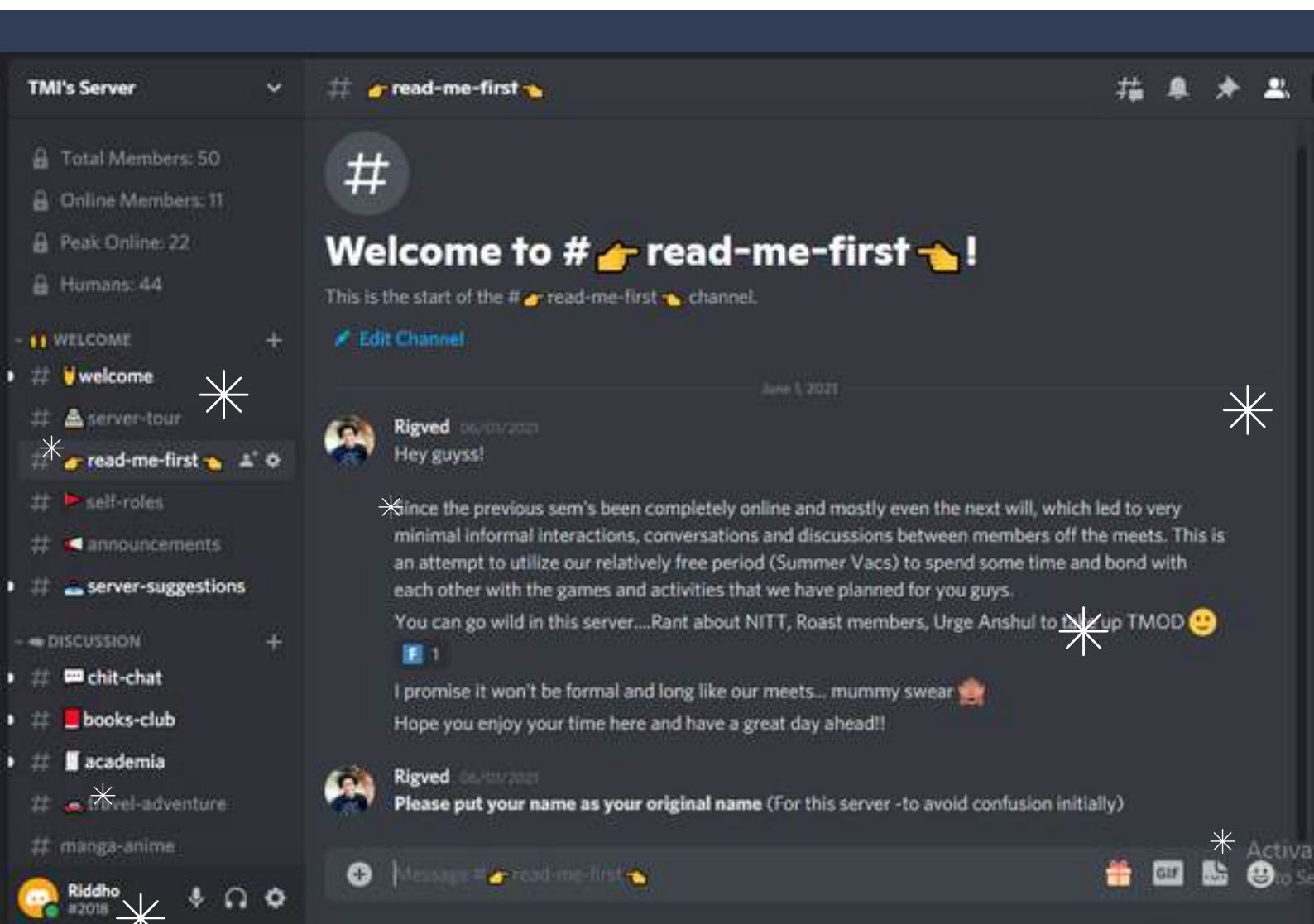
And that has been the purpose of creating the discord channel for Toastmasters. The idea being to increase familiarity amongst members by conducting several fun activities. Moreover, it helps new inductees get a sense of belonging to the club, as they get a chance to interact with existing members in a "Non-Toastmasters" framework. "

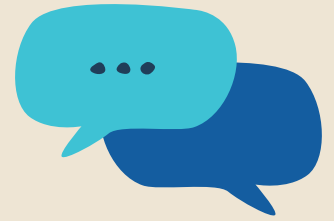
What fun activities?" -you may ask now.

Well right from streaming movies during weekends, which ensured a collective online cinematic experience to hosting games like Among Us, Pictionary, and Codenames which helped us exercise our creativity. Activities like "Impromptu Presentations" and "Play My Playlist" helped us to collectively share a bit of banter with each other, serving a much-needed change to our routine college lives. .

As you noticed, what discord has done is, it has changed the idea of community living in today's digital scenario, where people can listen to their favorite music together, gossip together till late night, share memes, epiphanies, travel stories, cute Angad pics, and the list goes on and on.

At last I would like to say what discord has helped TMI is, it has converted ' TMI Club ' to ' TMI Family '.





WORD OF MOUTH

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY

WORD OF MOUTH

Read through as Toastmasters from various, different clubs provide their testament to the absolute awesomeness called TMI NITT meets.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. We really enjoyed the whole session. A special thanks to TM Angad and a special brotherly thanks to TM Jayen. He had a very well connection and coordination with TMOD choirs. One of the best, memorable event this joint TM meet was. We will never forget this meet and we should have more such meets in upcoming future!

We have learned a lot and inspired by your team performance. The session was really branded one. We admire the team spirit, cooperation, efforts and innovations of TMI NIT Trichy. We felt like NIT Trichy plus Toastmasters is an incredible combo.



TM BLESSY
DXC DLF TOASTMASTERS



TM GEETANJALI
COLOSSUS TOASTMASTERS

It is always a treat to be a visiting toastmaster and my first visit to a TMI NITT meet to deliver my L1P2 part II speech was indeed a memorable one. The enthusiasm and level of preparation each roleplayer had for the meet inspired me to work harder. I thought I might feel left out in the meet as I was after all a visiting member but the President, TM Angad asking me to take part in the Table topic Session as well as being introduced to the audience before my speech made me more comfortable.

L1P2's second speeches are special because you are incorporating changes to your speech but at the same time ensuring the message and essence of the speech is not lost. I will always remember how I could deliver my speech and connect with the audience of TMI NITT.

The TMOD session 'Dimensions' by TM Samriddho was an intriguing one and by the end of it I was sure of the fact that in another part of this universe a TM Geetanjali, a state-level basketball player very much exists!

I am glad I have these memories from that fateful meet and I am looking forward to make more such memories.

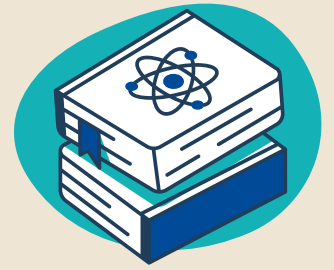
WORD OF MOUTH

Table topics is my personal favourite part during a meeting; coming up with a witty speech within a short duration of time is something that fascinates me a lot. I was delighted to take up the role of the table topics master in a meet with TMI, for the introduction of the lateral inductees. Coming up with something creative and close to an ice breaker at the same time took a long brainstorming and research process.



TM ISHITA
COLOSSUS TOASTMASTERS





EXCITING EXPERIENCES

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY

By the power vested in me...

Join us as our **Sergeant At Arms TM Swastik** walks us through the trials and tribulations of conducting an online TM meet successfully

"Swastik bro! It's 6:30, dude. We are good to go."

Angad sounds serene as usual but there I'm, still drowning in a pool of tension. As usual. With deep breaths, I try to calm my nerves down as I proceed to open the meet on the unfortunately customary Teams call. However, what is not customary is the part where I have to unmute. Can you imagine picturing me as the kid who confidently unmutes in class to spew nonsense only to follow it up with a grin to show how proud they are of their mistake? Like hell, even my mom didn't smile so gracefully looking at the mistake she made. But sigh, here I am. Well, at least I'm not spewing nonsense but just giving the conventional SAA address. And yet there I sit, nervous. No, not because I'm the SAA, opening the meet but rather because I'm still in my home, and if there's one thing I know as a brown kid, your parents somehow know the worst possible time to beckon you. And what better time when my turn to unmute and switch my camera on comes up.

"Sonuuuu!!!! How many times have I told you to fill the water bottles? Would it hurt to listen to your mother just once?"

Signaling her to scamper off with my eyes, I whisper, "2 minutes!"

"Kya 2 min 2 min. I told you to fill it up nearly an hour ago!"

"Ok fine, sorry! My meeting has started, just give me 2 minutes!"

While all this confusion unravels, my poor TMI folks are left stranded at the pity of their wits so as to figure out where did I disappear off to. Such is the power of a mother that even the President of the club can do nothing but ask, "Swastik bro? You there?"

However, the meet is not delayed for long and soon gets underway. Dabadoo Dabada the meet proceeds in conventional fashion. Well, conventional to me at least, for I have never known what Toastmasters is like beyond a screen. To see those little chirpy bobbleheads all scattered over my screen, smiling and surprised as each Toastmaster brings something new to the platter while I try to figure out what's going on in the match that has my dad on pins and needles and yelling at the TV in the hall beside me while coming up with a way of putting up with my sister's hideous humming of songs from the other room. I'm often asked as to why I hate K-pop. And the answer to that is I don't. It's just my sister's ability to make a song sound as horrible yet memorable as possible (Sounds like my romantic past for some reason). With so many details thrown up in the air, it can get confusing. Irritating. Overwhelming. Worrying. And whatever comes to your head along these lines.

Despite this plethora of information running through the room, the room itself doesn't seem to have changed. It's still the same untidy room courtesy to my irresponsible housekeeping skills, and other than my books spread out in disarray and my clothes chucked into the corner of a room, there isn't much to distract my dead fish eyes from the screen. There I patiently sit, with nothing else to drag my attention, focusing on the meet, until the classic interruption hits me like a runaway train. Poor Wi-Fi. Damn! Why don't I come across such a stroke of luck when I really need it? Like, I had a viva right before the meet started, why not then? Why does it only have to be during these 2 hours of the week?

Thankfully, I can rely on my mobile data and make sure I don't miss out on the feedback forms given out. As the SAA, I'm often accused of having the power to peek into everyone's feedback. To all those people reading this newsletter, why don't you use your power to shut up? Just hear me out. Ok? Or read in this case. I am the one in charge of giving proxies from my friends' accounts and have still ended up at a disposition where, forget theirs, I can't even manage my own attendance! What makes you think a lazy bone like me would even bother with your feedback? You aren't Christopher Nolan writing out mind puzzling scripts that would catch my interest. It's just feedback. Nothing but simple feedback! Why would I go out of my way to read it? Just take it! Well, I say that, but I don't know if you guys have been using the feedback to send cryptic messages to launch an attack or something worse, which quite honestly is within the realms of reality, in which case I might be accused of assisting it. And for that, officer, I request you to utilize this piece of the newsletter as my proof of innocence.

Ok, coming back from the end of the world to the end of the meeting. My cue comes up once again, this time for certificates, and with that, the meet concludes, followed up with a bit of chit-chat to relax down finally. Now back on campus, chilling at 9 pm is easy going. Stay laid back, stretch a bit, and yawn, pretending to listen to how everyone is pissed off at some prof as I take the spinach?.... What? Ok editors, that's one step too many indeed. At home, pulling off a stunt like that is instant death. Or even in an offline TM meeting, I guess. Not sure. I mean, do taboo topics stand even after the meet ends?

Anyways, the point is that trying to get along with people isn't that easy on a virtual platform. No, not because of the spinach but rather the lack of elements to keep a conversation going. Offline, one could always compliment on the new clothes you're wearing or inquire you on what's in that heavy bag of yours. Online, all you see are faces. Some chirpy, some tired, some awkward



waiting for someone to ask a question, and of course, the ugly face of mine. You can't help but only ask, "How's life bro?". I am an engineering student. Shouldn't that give you an idea? Don't get me wrong. I don't blame people who start off the post-meeting procedure with this question. It's just instinctive, given the lack of landscape in an online session.

However, as they say, all things must come to an end. With students slowly being called back, this online situation could be coming to a close unless Omicron decides to get jacked up on Gatorade. One can only hope at this point. With that said, I'd be lying if I said I'm happy to see this online façade end. After all, for someone with severe anxiety, it has helped me bypass the fear of people, letting me get closer to people. I guess everything happens for a reason. Not sure if I can give the same explanation for why my resume looks empty, though. Anyways, with hopes high and campus reopening, it's about time I prepare myself for my long-lost anxiety to meet people. And on that note, I'll take my leave.

Exuberance

By TM Merlin

The Area Contest was an incredible experience to both observe and organize. The core team of the area contest encouraged me to arrange this area contest, despite the fact that I am the polar opposite of exuberant.

The Area contest was led by three key core members: the Chief Judge, the Area Director, and the Contest Chair. Although we were in a time crunch, we made sure to meticulously check every area of the regulation to ensure a smooth drive throughout the procedure. The risks that could occur were identified, and it was ensured that nothing went wrong during the journey.

Within a week, three of us could manage to conduct the Area Contest with proper communication and division of responsibilities. The roleplayers definitely did a marvelous job and the whole team together made this process a fun ride.

The contestants undoubtedly gave it their best, and without them, this contest would not have been a success. The contestants' efforts to prepare, motivated us to guarantee that the virtual contest ran smoothly.

Virtual platforms may not be an ideal contest venue because of the several glitches that may occur which are beyond our control. However, with adequate risk assessment, they can be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

I believe this is the appropriate time to thank the Area Director, TM Kratika, who assisted and supported me during the entire process. She put her blood, sweat, and tears into this contest, from the selection of roleplayers until the end. She has definitely upheld the name of Toastmasters NIT TRICHY Chapter among the district.

Personally, I enjoyed the Exuberance Expedition. One important lesson I learned was that with careful preparation, risk assessment, backups, and coordination, any event can be executed flawlessly. While I regret the lack of background music during the break, I was pleased with the overall outcome of the contest.

Ain't no party like a Toasties' Party

What makes a fun, extravaganza party? TM Nipun is here to answer as he narrates his experience of hosting a party with our buddy club - Trichy Toastmasters club.



Toastmasters Buddy Club Special event was a memorable and exciting event for me. When the president contacted me to take up the role of event chair for the event, I wasn't very sure how I would handle it. But as Richard Branson rightly said, "If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later!". So I decided to take it up.

Then Toastmaster Raghavan and I, the event chairs from Trichy Toastmasters, started working on the event. Initially, it took some time to find the role players since they differed from ordinary Toastmaster meets. After which, we coordinated various parts of the event.



The role players were indeed very enthusiastic and creative folks. We didn't face any difficulties conveying what we were looking for, and we also took their opinions on how they would like to go about the role. A day before the event, we were ready with the script, posters, and the agenda for the event.

On the day of the event, I was a bit tense about how the show would go; since it is an online event, many parameters could go wrong. As the event went on, I was so mesmerized by the programs that I even forgot I was the event chair.

The show was colorful and impressive. The ambiance built by the two MCs Toastmaster Shrinika and Toastmaster Pavan ensured that the audience enjoyed every bit of the performance. The participants and the role players gave all their effort to the event.

I was delighted I took up this opportunity, as I got a chance to meet and interact with a lot of people, the role players were very supportive. Finally, the event wouldn't have been possible without such a wonderful audience. I am very sure that this event will always have a special place in my memories.

"If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes - then learn how to do it later!
- Richard Branson



I RECENTLY HAD TAKEN THE EXHAUSTING BUT ENTRANCING ROLE OF MC IN THE SPECIAL EVENT ORGANIZED BY THE BUDDY CLUB. IT WAS EXHAUSTING AS THAT WAS MY 1ST TIME TAKING UP SUCH A ROLE AND ALSO BECAUSE I WAS UNABLE TO MANAGE TIME AS I HAD JUST STARTED COLLEGE LIFE IN CAMPUS . EVEN THOUGH IT WAS EXHAUSTING I ALSO FOUND IT TO BE A CAPTIVATING ROLE AS I FOUND OUT THERE ARE MANY IDEAS AND MANY WAYS FOR A MC TO HOST THE EVENT .

I ENJOYED THE EVENT QUITE A LOT. IT WAS QUITE EASY FOR ME TO HOST THE EVENT ALONG WITH THE OTHER MC AS WE HAD GOOD COORDINATION . ALL THE TOASTMASTERS WHO TOOK PART IN THE EVENT PUT UP A REALLY GOOD SHOW AND MADE IT MEMORABLE . I GOT TO INTERACT WITH SOME AMAZING PEOPLE , GOT GREAT ADVICE ON TIME MANAGEMENT AND GOT TO WITNESS THE WIDE ARRAY OF TALENTS OF MANY TALENTED PEOPLE.

IN THE END I REALLY LOVED THE EXPERIENCE AND FELT SATISFIED . AT THE START OF THE MEET ALL NEW FACES SEEMED UNFAMILIAR TO ME , BY THE ALL OF THEM BECAME FAMILIAR . THESE WERE THE AMAZING EXPERIENCES I FELT WHEN I TOOK UP THE ROLE.

TM PAVANKUMAR, THE NEW KID IN THE CLUB SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE OF BEING THE EMCEE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TOASTMASTERS

MY EVALUATION CONTEST JOURNEY

BY TM Sneha



Evaluations are something that I found unique about Toastmasters. Till then, I had only seen people giving feedback to a speaker after a meeting or event ended. I had never seen a speech evaluation being part of the agenda of a meet. I was always in awe of those who took up the role of evaluators in the club meetings. It felt like a daunting job, having to carefully listen to every word of the speech and give feedback. It felt like a huge responsibility.



Despite that, when our club evaluation contest was announced, I decided to participate in it, having very little knowledge on how to give an evaluation. I just wanted to challenge myself and thought a contest would be the best way to learn about evaluation.



Club and district-level educational sessions on preparing and delivering evaluations came to my rescue. I learned about content, technique, organizing, and giving an evaluation. The evaluators' tips given in each meeting were also helpful.

I participated in the club-level evaluation contest with no hopes of winning. I gave my evaluation, and though I was not very pleased with my performance, I was glad to have tried something new. I had stepped into unknown waters and thankfully had not drowned. I was astonished when I was

The greatest challenge of giving an evaluation is making it concise and comprehensive...

Participating in evaluation contests also made me analyze the feedback I give outside Toastmasters. Giving constructive feedback is a skill everyone needs in their life.



declared the winner, and I felt immense happiness.

My next stop, the area-level contest, seemed terrifying. I was representing my club, and I felt unsure about my abilities. I felt too inexperienced to give a good evaluation. However, my mentor and my seniors allayed my fears and encouraged me. I performed well in the contest, and I became the second runner-up in my first ever area-level contest.

The greatest challenge of giving an evaluation is making it concise and comprehensive. It felt like a Herculean task to present everything I wanted to say within a limited timeframe. However, this time restriction helped me make my evaluation crisp and well structured. Participating in evaluation contests also made me analyze the feedback I give outside Toastmasters.

Giving constructive feedback is a skill everyone needs in their life. All of us have had to provide feedback to others. I realized that developing my evaluation skills was essential in improving my public speaking.

Looking back at the club-level evaluation contest, I am proud of myself for having the courage to try something new. I consider it one of the milestones of my Toastmasters and public speaking journeys. It made me more confident and encouraged me to try new things, no matter how intimidating they appear. I look forward to entering more uncharted territories in my Toastmasters journey and conquering.



CREATIVE CORNER

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL NIT TRICHY

LEARN, IMPROVE & MASTER

An educational article by TM Merlin



"Who am I to write something that other people will read?"

I was satisfied with one response. A lot may be learned from experience. It's no surprise that our parents ask us to listen to our elders because age is directly proportional to experience, isn't it?.

Recently I came across a wonderful model for learning and development. It is called the 70:20:10 model. It asserts that people gain 70% of their knowledge from work-related experiences, 20% from interactions with others, and 10% from formal education. Let's look at it from the standpoint of a toastmaster. First, we have a set educational path that we follow.

Second, we have a community to support us as we expand. Third, we devote ourselves to giving speeches, evaluations, and competing in contests. As each year passes, we become more aware of our own talents and limitations, and we strive to improve ourselves as a whole. In a nutshell, Toastmasters provides you with a one-of-a-kind experience in public speaking and leadership. It is a unique package for anyone who is eager to explore and learn.

As an introvert, entering Toastmasters was intimidating, and joining a public speaking club seemed ironic. My initial goal was to improve mistakes as well. It is very easy for us to learn the skill of public speaking. Whether you are an introvert or someone who would puke in front of a massive crowd, having a mindset to develop yourself and learn from others is one of the variables to master public speaking.

Diving into the leadership realm of my journey. Taking initiative is something I enjoy, but the continual self-esteem issue dogged me. I never believed in myself and underestimated myself in various circumstances. In my first year, although my seniors advised me to take a leadership role, I hesitated and kept asking myself “Am I worth it?”, “Isn't it too early for a leadership role?”

I took academics as an excuse and escaped my way through competing for a position in the ExCom. Later in my second year, I realised the value of being a part of ExCom. Watching my friends perform their duties and giving back to the club, motivated me to apply for a role.

A performing activity like public speaking gets feedback and you yourself would know where you are deficient. Even before giving a speech you would know what would go wrong. It is just like singing. Sometimes you don't even need a judge to understand where you have missed a note. In the case of leadership, it is different. Unless you do not perform a leadership role, you would not know how to handle a situation. It is a whole new picture when it comes to being a leader

If you are still reading this and haven't taken a leadership role yet, the time is ticking my friend. Never miss an opportunity in taking a leadership role, it transforms your perspective on various aspects.

After taking a leadership role, what I have learned from my fellow toastmasters and my college mentor is to document everything.

Take time and reflect on the event that you conducted or sit with your team to evaluate the whole program. Trust me. It is worth it! All corporations understand the need for evaluation and feedback. The same goes with our personal life.

Documenting and evaluating our leadership journey helps us to understand ourselves better and to help you to navigate efficiently through the next leadership role. (P.S. If you are sitting for placements, it is highly beneficial too).

"All I'm trying to say is that you should be open to new chances, learn from others, and believe in yourself. Being around a community that aims to improve and help each other is a safe space for you to be out of your comfort zone."

I would say toastmasters prepares you to face the world outside the club or college in the majority of the aspects. Investing in learning how to improve your communication and leadership skills would never go in vain. Thus, take every single opportunity you get to improve and master skills

The Flying Nest

By TM HANAN



The well is comfortable. Cozy, familiar, welcoming. The green in the cracks of red peeks out, craning to get a taste of the air around it, and the gentle sparkles in the blue beneath glint off the dew drops on the blade. The still water paints a beautiful picture, stealing away a portion of the world beyond. The trees are slowly turning orange, and the breeze smells of change. Old lives wearing away, fresh ones sprouting up in their stead. An unsuspecting being meanders in every now and then, casually spelling the end for itself as it does so.

Home. It's all you've known. All your life, it's kept you safe, snug, beating away the wind, the cold, and the harsh, intrusive touch of the star outside in its prime. It will be your shield, all the way till the end. When the last breath of air escapes from your lips, it will mourn you and your life, safely lived. Safely lived. What more could you ask for?

But then you sit there, staring forlornly at the small portal home made for you to view the world outside. The water stares right back at you, hoping to pacify your curiosity with glimpses of the vivid orange and yellow beyond, spindled around sturdy brown. When some of the oranges and yellows decide to dip down and pay you a visit, home shrinks a little in fear. It grows more helpless by the day, as your yearning to break out grows, bit by bit. When the darkness sets in, home hugs you the closest, knowing all too well that what lies outside then is the most enticing. Little specks of yellow beckon from up above, telling tales of the conquered and the conquerors, the travel and the travelers, the seekers and the besought.

“

You experience the longing to reach out to the sturdy brown, to clasp on to it and climb up till you reach the lone owl you hear hooting within, every time the hunter sets out on his long journey, challenging Gaia as if to try and reach out to him and stand between him and his prey. You want to see him a little closer, a little clearer. You wonder if there are more like him out there, that home has hidden far away from where your eyes can see. You reach out to the blanket above but it is too far away.



”

The seed of curiosity has now branched out, firmly gripping your heart. You make your decision to finally set out.

So you begin the battle. The journey upward, the one outward. The fight to leave the comfort of home behind. And home, gentle as it appears to be, will simply not stand for it. It lashes out at you, with each step you take. It hides its fury within the deepening cracks of red, in the weakening roots of the green blades, and the trembling ripples beneath your feet, and fiercely unleashes it every time you attempt to leave, pushing you back down, back into itself. Stay, it beseeches. But you will not, or rather, cannot listen. When its fury settles down, all that home can resort to is a weak, back-handed effort to hold you back. It resorts to subdued threats, telling you tales about the dangers ahead, about how you would no longer have the sturdy red around you to shield you from the wind, the sun, the storm, and about how the blue outside will not be the calm, quiet and peaceful one you're now leaving behind.



As you finally depart, its whimpers still haunt you. You feel the heat on your skin and hesitate for a moment, the taunts of home echoing within your head. You are not sure whether you'll survive a day without it. You wish you had the will to be satiated with the view alone of the harsh world around you, and you wish you'd forsaken the urge to actually reach out and taste it. However, a little voice within whispers to you, to stop and listen. You decide to do so, and you now hear it clearly. The little sparrows hiding somewhere near you, chirping away the beautiful ballad of your victory. They sing of freedom, of an adventurous 'morrow that home refused you all this while. They lead you forward, farther and farther away, till the heat on your skin feels comforting, and the fragrance the wind brings with it feels inviting; the invitation it carries beckons you to places and sights you have yet to behold.

You think of home occasionally, when the going gets hard. You still wonder every now and then whether you were wrong to leave it behind, and whether it was right to turn a deaf ear to your pleas for so long. Sometimes you want to abandon the journey through your newfound world, retreat back into your shell, and go back to being the frog in the well. But as soon as the blizzards settle down, you set yourself back on track again, and trudge further away from it. You will go back home someday, you tell yourself. And the best thing about home is that it forgives. When you go back, a tinsy bit apologetic but not even a little regretful, it will still welcome you; a hesitating, subdued embrace, but an embrace nonetheless. Reassuring yourself so, you plod on, guided by the sparkle of the hunter's belt above you, into the unknown in search of your calling.

MUSIC AND ME

By TM Manasa

“Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first” I totally agree with this quote. My parents introduced me to various activities like drawing, singing and chess from a very young age. This helped me build these interests over the years. Ever since I started learning Carnatic music (at the age of four), I fell in love with it. I always loved attending the music classes and singing in the apartment for an audience at every New Year or Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations.

I was asthmatic as a kid, I am not sure if it is true, but I believe that singing has helped me overcome my asthma. Music has always held a special place in my heart. My interest in music and singing grew so much over the years that I used to hum songs even without realising.

After learning in Hyderabad for 4 years, we moved to Mumbai. In Mumbai, we luckily found a good Carnatic music teacher, who helped me improve my singing further. She focused more on individual singing rather than group and thus stressed that I sing louder. She would often scold if I wasn't loud enough. I was very scared to attend her classes and sometimes even cried at home whenever she scolded me. However, now I realise how much she and her scolding has helped me hone my singing talent and voice. She also used to organize small concerts in her apartment's clubhouse, where the students sang and all our parents came and listened. Refreshing those memories feels extremely nice and gets me nostalgic. I was also in the school choir and I had a lot of fun singing western songs in the school. I never liked to sing in only one particular genre, I loved all kinds of music and found happiness in trying out different genres and languages.

After we shifted to Bangalore, I learnt MUSIC online from Shankar Mahadevan Academy, and later stopped learning as I had to concentrate more on studies. Although I stopped training from a teacher, I never stopped singing and learning on my own. I still used to sing in the apartment. It gives me enormous pleasure to sing for people who are interested to listen to me. Although I get very nervous before singing, I really enjoy the experience while I'm singing and after. I also got more interested into western music and English pop songs during my teenage and used to love singing those songs along with my friends.

We also formed a band of 8 and named it “Octave”, for a Battle of bands competition, that was supposed to be held in our school in a few months. We also performed in front of a few of our favourite teachers and friends. Although that competition had unfortunately got cancelled, I still cherish those beautiful moments we spent rehearsing and we all had great fun working together.

I was very busy with JEE preparation during 11th and 12th grade. Lockdown also got me listening to a lot of YouTube singers. That's when I got really inspired by Shreya Karmakar, my favorite YouTube singer and I wanted to make videos like her too. I was just waiting for that day, when all exams would get over and I would record my songs, But the lockdown never seemed to end. The day after September 27th, 2020 was one of the happiest. JEE advanced had got over and I had the freedom to do anything I wanted. So, I recorded a song and a video to put on my YouTube channel that I had been wanting to create since so many months. I shared the links to all my friends and family members as soon as I published the video. By the end of the day, reading so many messages, I was in seventh heaven. It felt unreal to finally see my own YouTube channel.

Music has always been my stress buster; I love to listen to Arijit Singh's songs for relaxation. Although it has been many years since I stopped learning Carnatic music, even now, when I listen to Carnatic music, it fills me with me positivity.

Music has been the cure to my sadness and company in my happy moments. In conclusion, music is like my best friend.

Listen to more of TM Manasa's mellifluous renditions at her YouTube channel '[Magic of Melody](#)'.

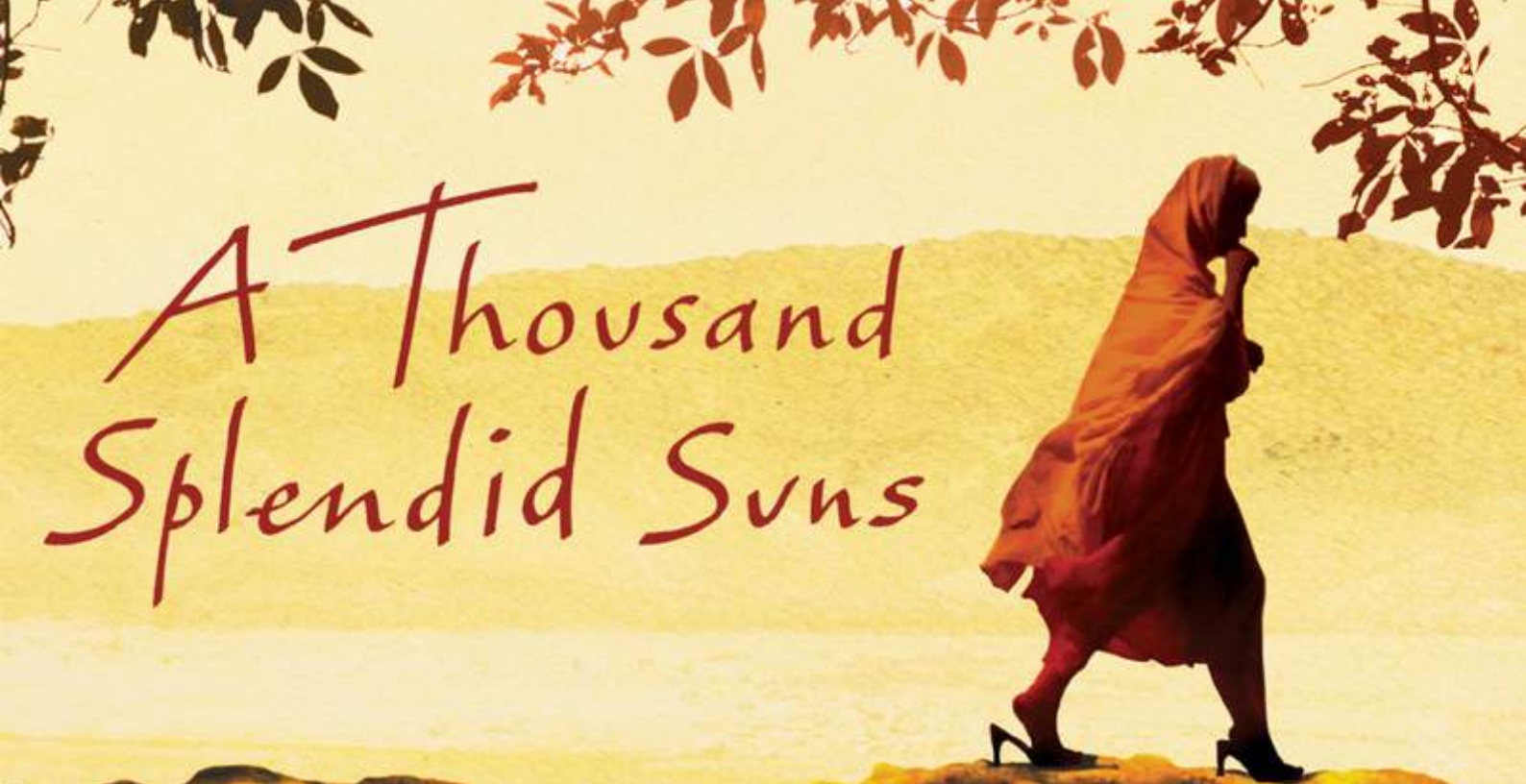
THE LIGHT OF YOUR STARS

By Nila

The light of your stars
Sometimes when we are sitting in the deepest well,
Exhausted, tired, and broken,
There seems to be no light of hope
It's dark, lonely, and we feel like a mere shell.
The misery and pain are unspoken,
with nothing that can help us cope.
But, when you keep seeing
deep into the darkness ahead,
You notice the faint twinkle of stars.
They seem to be guaranteeing,
a glimmer of hope that appears to form a thread,
deep within your heart, it spurs
an unknown light.
It expands, beating with the rhythm of stars,
growing, lifting, and nourishing.
It gives you the power to fight,
not the darkness, but the chains that deter
the growth of your light.
You learn to embrace the depth
of the darkness
as it is what brightens
the light of your stars...

Editors' remarks:

This poem was penned by TM Pooja, who occasionally writes under the moniker of 'Nila'.



The Sunlit Afghan Stream

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS BY KHALED
HOSSEINI

A BOOK REVIEW BY TM KRATIKA

You, my reader, if you have come this far, I hope you have read all the pages so far. Hence I will allow myself the hope that you will read this one till the end as well. Reading a review on a book as popular as *A Thousand Splendid Suns* might be another cliché from your day today. However, there is something about Khaled Hosseini's writing that will always compel you to read the book twice. Therefore, this review is for you, if you haven't read it. If you have, this review is to convince you to read once more, then once more... In any case, I am low-key forcing you to stay with me.

Second from the pen of Khaled Hosseini flows this rich river of words. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a book like a water stream that never stands still. It emerges from the era of King Zahir Shah's 26th year in his almost uneventful 40 years reign. It then traverses the darkest of the ages in Afghanistan's history. It sees many kings slain, unruly rulers dethroned, coups staged, militants marching, wars waged - both among nations and among the brethren of one's own. Finally, it comes to rest at a hitherto peaceful period of Hamid Karzai's presidency. When such a story approaches its end, there's a stillness, a disturbing stillness in the reader's heart, which is hard to avoid and often leads to catharsis.

Unlike its predecessor *The Kite Runner*, this book feels more wholesome when it ends. No guilt was forced to be justified by the author and the reader held the right to choose whether to free the perpetrator of guilt or not, as Jalil writes:

**"I dare, I dare allow myself the hope...,
[that] you'll be more charitable to me than I
ever was to you."**

That freedom is provided to the reader. Even though the writer has experimented with writing style as compared to the previous one, it still manages to remain under control when one compares it to *The Mountains Echoed*. There, one might find that the multi-generational story derails from the narration and the end is far from complete. Perhaps the second time is a real charm.

Khaled Hosseini writing from a female point of view is a delicious feast. For a busy reader, it's a fast paced read that will never allow you to let their guards down. To a slow one, it will open a box of never-encountered-before emotions. To an analytical reader, it gives parallel stories of Mariam and Afghanistan that branch and connect at various points of time, surfacing astonishing events, both in the plot and in history. To a reader with a literary hunger, here is a platter with the most exquisite references from Persian writers. You encounter Hafez singing his ghazal out from the pages:

*Joseph shall return to Canon, grieve not,
Hovels shall turn to rose gardens, grieve not.
If a flood should arrive, to drown all that's alive,
Noah is your guide in the typhoon's eye, grieve
not.*

Khaled Hosseini himself played a couple of strings in the prose with words as he talked about the clink of icicles falling from the snow-burdened branches.

The characters bearing names significant to the story come alive as they commit the most human mistakes that wipe away some smiles, sometimes forever. Sometimes they perform heroic tasks and help others rewrite their destiny. Sometimes they scare you, at others you find yourself swooning over their intellect. A thriller of emotions, this book itself symbolises what Saib-e-Tabrizi sings in the glory of Kabul:

**"One could not count the moons that
shimmer on her roofs,
Or the thousand splendid suns that hide
behind her walls."**

Indeed, one can never count them all - a thousand splendid suns in which this book is resplendent.



EVANESCO

A SHORT STORY BY TM JAYENDRAN

"Life is made of hundred indelible moments and a billion mundane moments. We live the mundane by lingering over the indelible. Just like I linger over our college days, Jo."

It was a handwritten letter from Lemon, whom Jo last saw during her college ceremony.

"This tiny gift right here preserves those precious moments – as if you live on that moment frozen forever." Inside the gift box, wrapped in a crimson cover, was a Polaroid camera.

*"The beauty in places, humans, and nature. The enchanting hues and tints. This can capture everything. Except for ghosts they'd say, lol.
Hope you like this vintage Polaroid Camera. We should catch up soon.
With love and regards,
Lemon."*

Inside the picture slot of the camera was a selfie snapshot of Lemon spouting with a yellow vintage racing car in her background. Jo's eyes had childlike exuberance while examining the camera. It was a white Polaroid One-Step SX-70 with a rainbow strip adorning the front. The click button was eerily placed in the front, along with the lens and the picture

slot. At the bottom was a label stuck, with the name and address of the shop printed on it.

Evanesco stores

What an odd way to name a shop, Jo thought. Jo was an amateur photographer herself with a dedicated Instagram page full of her beautiful clicks. She decided to stroll out of her house to try out this vintage camera.

Thud.

As Jo was sitting along the banks of the temple pond, she was startled by the sudden diving of the boy. The brown, skinny boy, donning his red undergarment, swam across the pond and climbed upon the banks, where Jo was sitting. Climbed up the stairs and raced to the platform, he stretched his arms forward and gave a weird diving pose. Jo took her Polaroid camera and bent herself to attain the perfect angle. The boy squatted down a bit, pushed his legs back, and hopped from the platform. As Jo clicked the button, her eyes shut down and she blacked out for a second. As she opened her eyes, she held the snapshot of the boy diving into the pond. With a sense of satisfaction, she strolled away from the pond.

Oddly this time, she didn't hear the splash of the boy diving.

The time was six o'clock. Jo was holding Lemon's snapshot tightly as ever with tears rolling down her cheeks. She had received a phone call from her dad fifteen minutes ago that Lemon was missing. Lemon had apparently gone out for some reason yesterday and never come back

.

After gathering some courage, Jo called Lemon's mother and comforted her. They were living some ten kilometers away from her place. She decided to meet them in person. She packed all essentials in her carryalls, including the camera, and booked the cab.

As she was looking out through the cab window, she noticed an array of missing posters on the huge building walls. She felt as if her bumping heart was whipped. Out of all those missing posters, one caught her attention as she summoned the cab driver to halt.

She felt the face of the missing person to be familiar. A skinny brown boy. She couldn't realize it at first, but eventually, it came to her mind. She hastily searched through her carryall and picked the snapshot of the diving boy. Although she couldn't see his face clearly in the snapshot, she was convinced that it was the diving boy who

was missing.

She arrived at Lemon's apartment. Her mother was wailing at one corner, with a childhood picture of Lemon at her hands. Quivered by the sudden tragedy, she eventually stood up and greeted Jo. She went into the kitchen and brought a cup of tea with biscuits for her. As her mother spoke more and more about Lemon, and how she longed to meet Jo before her disappearance, Jo was trembling with grief. She consoled her by hugging her tightly.

Jo was standing at the apartment, waiting for her cab back home. She was holding the snapshots of Lemon and the diving boy. And she glanced at her other photographs, all of which were of inanimate objects. Her mind reminded her of the blacking out sensation she gets when she presses the click button. She took out the camera and examined it more carefully.

This time she held her camera with her hands trembling. She clicked the button as she focused on a cow eating off the wall poster. The blacking out sensation engulfed once again and as she opened her eyes; all she could see was the wall poster half torn with no living being nearby.

It can't be, she thought. I am making up my mind. This is a whole lot of coincidences. Maybe the boy swam away when I blacked out. Maybe the cow moved away when I blacked. Maybe this is a coincidence. Or maybe....

She looked at the lens with her stupefied eyes. Then, she glinted at the label of the shop stuck on the camera's back once more.

Evanesco stores

She decided to cancel the cab and look at the shop.

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Between two high-rise buildings was this narrow cobblestone alley. As she moved past the iron gates and a dilapidated post box, she walked towards the other end of this alley where the shop is supposed. The alley was filled with polished and unused vintage automobiles as if it was made just now. Amidst all those automobiles, she immediately recognized one of them to be the yellow racing car, which was present in Lemon's selfie.

The shop was small and unpacked. The roof was about five feet from the floor and the neon signboard with the name "Wormwood Stores" adorned the roof. The shelves were filled with vintage toys, cameras, a film projector, and many such that would bring out the nostalgia.

Sitting on a three-leg stool was ghastly looking old lady, wearing dark blue Kurtis and sipping black beverage, which she couldn't say what it is. Behind her was a six-foot mirror, which showed a rather blurry reflection.

"Good evening! How can I help you?" – she welcomed her warmly. As she was about to speak, she interrupted calmly, "Why don't you

first sit on that chair there?" Jo rested slowly on the wooden chair, beside her. "Madam, in our store, you cannot buy anything for yourself. This shop is exclusively for friends, family, and kin to gift their beloved ones."

"Why is that so?" – Jo inquired curiously.

The lady answered – "Perhaps, it was our policy and a specialty, you could say, of our shop to sell materials as a gift." She continued. "We have, erm... all kinds of gifts – you see, watches, cameras..."

This time Jo interrupted. "Excuse me, Madam. I am not here to buy anything. Yesterday, my friend came to this shop and brought me this Polaroid camera."

"Ah yes. She was quite petite I'd say. She said she bought it for her friend. Such a lovely woman she was!" – the lady was speaking tenaciously. "Madam, if you are here to return this camera back, I am afraid you cannot. You cannot return a gift once you bought it. It is one of our policies."

She had finished her cup of beverage and had now stood up from her seat.

"No. I am not here to return either. It's just that... she was last seen going out to buy this gift." She took the camera out of her carryalls. "...and she didn't return back. It's been a day already." The lady's horrid eyes were fixated on the camera.

"Oh! This is a Polaroid One-step SX-70. Hard to get one like this these days. You ought to know, the snapshot quality was far superior for its time." She took her spectacles from the desk and was cleaning it using a silk cloth. "I am so sorry, my darling. I hope you will find her soon." As she wore the spectacles, Jo observed that it became clouded, as if her eyes were hidden somewhere.

"Can I be of any help to you, dear?"

It blacked out and when I open my eyes, the thing, the living thing that I was taking the picture had vanished." The old lady was unsurprised. She made a chuckle. As Jo narrated the story of the diving boy and the cow, she brushed them aside. "You are thinking too much of this, dear. Maybe the shock of your friend's disappearance might have given you such thoughts." She wasn't looking at Jo now but at the desk that she was cleaning.

"I am wondering, was she..." – Jo quivered, "did she disappear after posting this to me?" The lady replied, "The last I saw her was when she posted the gift box in that post-box at that end and exited through the iron gate." Jo was startled by her ability to see through the other end of the alley despite her age and eyesight that requires spectacles.

Suddenly, a thought came to her hand. She didn't think through much, but she wanted to take a shot. Literally a shot. Her instincts were telling her that this old lady is the clue to Lemon's mysterious disappearance. And she must first find out who she is. She took her camera hesitantly but firmly and focused her lenses on that lady with perfection.

Jo was perplexed. "I mean, the gift box can be sent through courier if I am not wrong. How can she possibly post it there? That looks like a decrepit post box. I wonder who will use that."

She clicked the button and she blacked out once again.

The lady replied back, "Of course, you can post a gift box through that post box. It is not decrepit. It is still in use. She delivered through a somewhat exclusive service, available for select ones like those. Don't you know it, darling?" Her calm demeanor made that dubious reply look plausible. The lady's hands were stiff, and it is hard to tell what she feels due to the clouded spectacles.

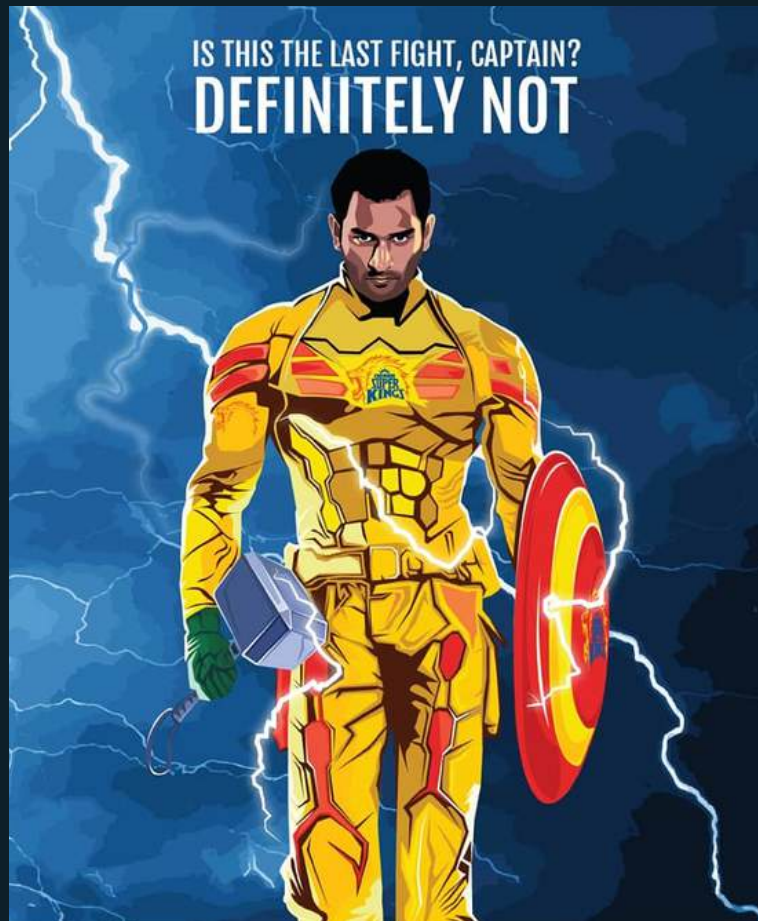
In the midst of the chair, the Polaroid camera was lying, and stuck inside the picture slot was the photograph of the store, the shelves, the desk, the empty three-legged stool, and the large mirror, showing the reflection of Jo holding the camera.

The old lady was still cleaning the desk.

With fear lurking in her mind, she asked the lady, "Whenever I click a picture, I suddenly ge



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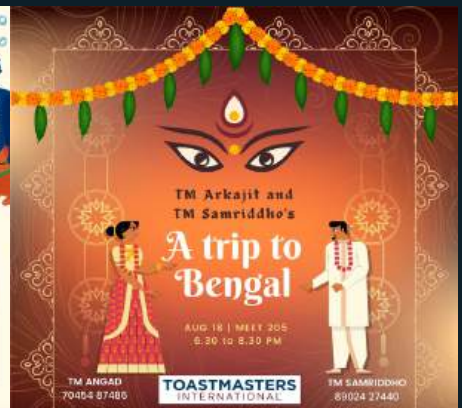
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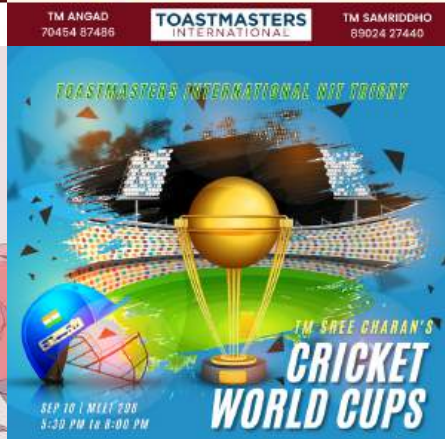
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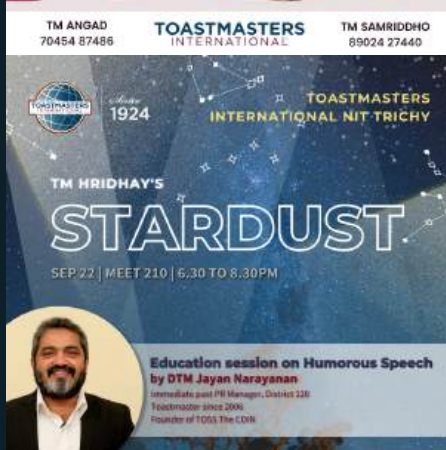
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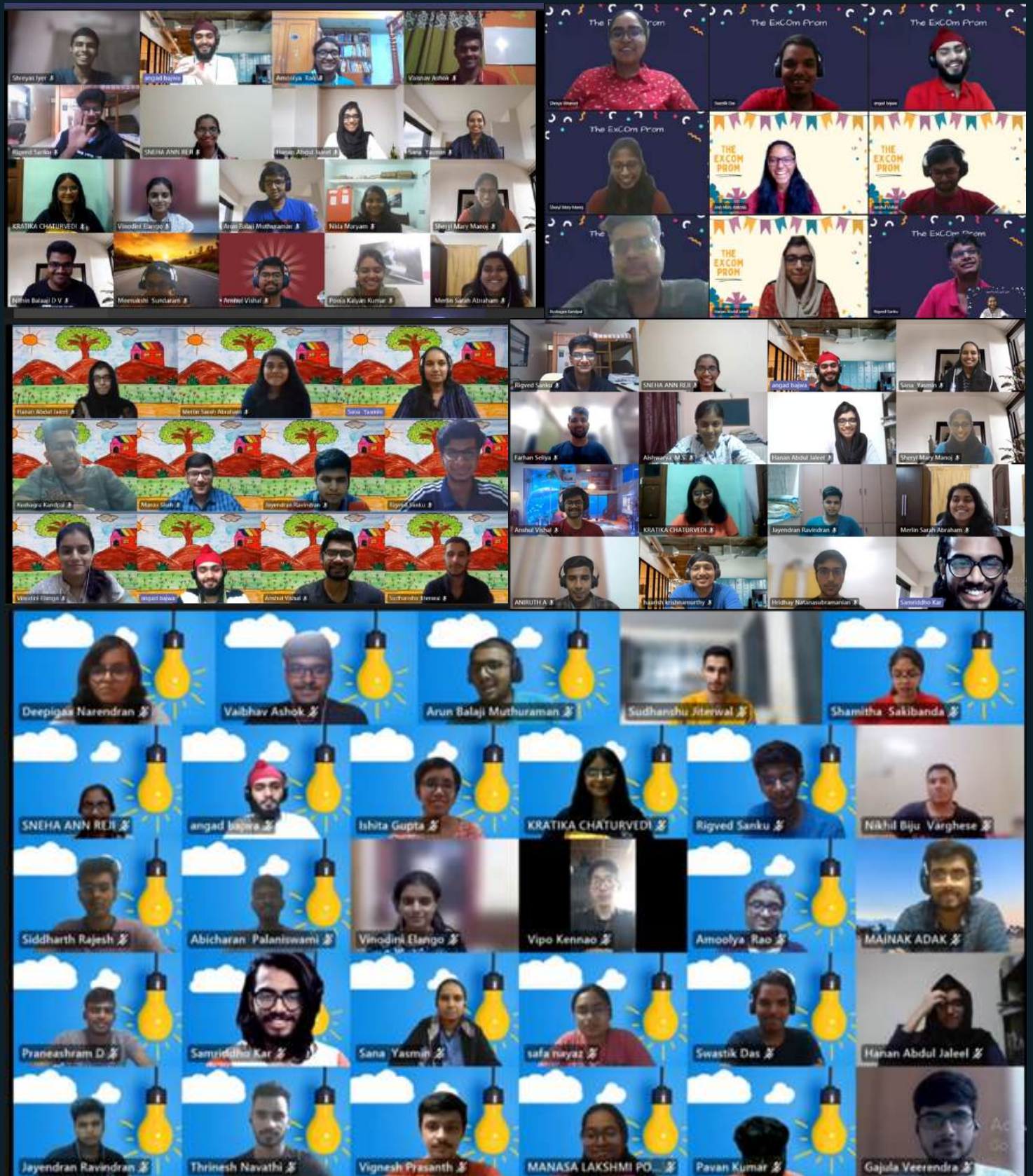


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MEETING FLYERS



MEETING PICS

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