

# Mercury's Messenger



Above left: Toastmaster of the Year Hari Kotrotsios with 2010-2011 Area 22 Governor Guido Schouteten. Right: Outgoing President Sue Kruger presents her President's Award to Ian Pinker. See page 3 for New Ways Award recipient.

## Step up and celebrate our members' success

*By President, Patti Kuss*

Mercury's Motivators is a club built on the experience of its committed members.

However, experience alone is not enough – a felled tree in the forest has experience. What makes Mercury's Motivators great is the willingness of our members to embrace change as espoused by our wonderful Immediate Past President Sue Kruger's vision of *Finding New Ways*.

Growth implies change. My challenge

to Mercury's members is to continue *Stepping Up* by embracing change, finding new ways or just doing old ways better.

It is also important to remember to celebrate each attempt to Step Up regardless of the perceived outcome. We have control only of our efforts. The way may not always be smooth or the effect may not seem to be large, but by appreciating and *celebrating* our Stepping Up, we will find

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Bi-monthly bulletin of  
Mercury's Motivators  
Toastmasters Club

Club: 711243  
Central Division  
District 69

**Vision:**

Mercury's is a professional club which provides fun, fellowship and innovation combined with epicurean delights

Meets 4th weekend of every month at various locations around Queensland's Sunshine Coast



**Executive committee:**

- President:  
**Patti Kuss**
- Vice President Education:  
**Ian Pinker**
- Vice President Membership:  
**Coral McVean**
- Vice President Public Relations:  
**Judith McConnell**
- Treasurer:  
**Penne Bowles**
- Secretary:  
**Barbara Richardson**
- Sergeant at Arms:  
**Kevin Wright**

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Above: 2011-2012 District Governor John Kay (far right) and fellow Mercurians on his District team Patti Kuss (Area 3 Governor), Hari Kotrotsios (Corroboree editor), Gary Kuss (Central Division Governor), Sue Kruger (District Secretary), Fran Kay (Directory editor) and Ian Pinker (Area Governor Mentor).

# Club officers step up to their new positions

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new energy and excitement to grow. The outgoing and incoming team had a joint executive meeting in May. At that meeting it was proposed that one way we could Step Up is to honour the timeliness of meetings. Our incoming Vice President Education Ian Pinker has already distributed some new time keeping sheets that may be of assistance to members, particularly new ones and for guests who help with timing.

Thank you Ian for Stepping Up. Thank you to the new executive for Stepping Up to your new positions. Thank you to all the old executive for handing on the club in such

great shape.

Mercury's members have also been Stepping Up at the recent District training weekend. I want to celebrate the achievements of my fellow members, in particular John Kay as incoming District Governor, Sue Kruger as incoming District Secretary, Coral McVean as outgoing Immediate Past District Governor, Gary Kuss as incoming Central Division Governor and outgoing Area 3 Governor and myself as incoming Area 3 Governor.

I am honored to be President of such a great club. Together let us continue to Step Up and Celebrate.

- Patti Kuss, President  
*Step Up and Celebrate*

## Opportunities for members

Past District Governor Coral McVean says it's tremendous to see club members take on District roles again this year. She offers the following tips:

- Have the big picture plan, medium and short-term goals. Monitor progress regularly.
  - Visualise success in achieving your goals.
  - I won't have all of the answers and that's ok.
  - If you say you will do something, do it.
  - Acknowledge all emails promptly.
  - Listen to your team and discuss ideas with them.
  - Be flexible.
  - Personal recognition is very important to everyone.
  - When you make a mistake, take responsibility without a "but."
  - Accept praise graciously.
- "Since joining Toastmasters 11 years ago I have been given countless opportunities to improve my communication and leadership skills," she said.

## Diary dates

**Saturday, 30 July**  
12pm for 12.30pm start  
Sweet Basil Restaurant,  
Morayfield

**Sunday, 28 August**  
12.30pm  
Le Relais Bressan, Flaxton

**RSVP: Kevin Wright (SAA)**  
kev@wrightbros.com.au



# Members contribute to fun and fellowship

By the time you read this, I will be your Immediate Past President and will have confidently handed over the reins to your new President Patti Kuss.

I said at the beginning that it would be an honour to be your President and I have definitely been honoured by all of you this past year.

All members strove to contribute to our vision of *Fun, fellowship and innovation combined with epicurean delights* and have enthusiastically embraced our



**Sue presents the inaugural New Ways Award to Barbara Richardson for her exciting and varied contributions to her assigned meeting roles.**

theme of *Finding New Ways*.

Yes, we have attained distinguished status, but more importantly, our meetings have been well-attended, well-run, exciting at times and very enjoyable. Our programs have been well-planned, our venues and times varied, our membership retained, and our fellowship and camaraderie strengthened. I believe our business sessions have attained a new level of professionalism that will no doubt carry over to our home clubs. Each of you has been an integral part of our thriving and vibrant club and I thank you for your contribution to Mercury's this past year.

I sincerely thank the executive for being a great team to work with as well. I now hand over to Patti and am delighted that she is enthusiastic and excited about being your new President; she will be a strong and extremely capable leader.

Be proud Mercurians, you have made it a wonderful year and a wonderful club!

**- Sue Kruger,  
Immediate Past President**

## *Hari embraces Toastmasters opportunities*

*Toastmaster of the Year Hari Kotrotsios joined Mercury's Motivators two years ago, soon after arriving on the Sunshine Coast.*

*"I didn't know anyone when I moved here, so I visited all the Toastmasters clubs to meet new friends," she said.*

*In that first year, Hari took on the Vice President Public Relations role at Mercury's and was President at her home club, Coolum.*

*"It was the first time I'd been on an executive committee. As I was working and travelling while in Sydney I didn't have the time to commit to a club officer role."*

*Since then, Hari has presented educational sessions at Central Division's club officer training days, Speechcraft courses and coordinates the Youth Leadership courses at Coolum High School.*

*"It's been a great learning experience and I have enjoyed the opportunities available through Toastmasters.*

*"I particularly relish the fun and challenges offered by an advanced club such as Mercury's Motivators."*

*Hari has also returned to her writing ways after a long detour caused by the travel bug and recently set up a blogsite to share her adventures.*

### **Birthday wishes:**

16 July  
**Sue Kruger**

21 August  
**Brian Duckworth**

23 August  
**Coral McVean**

26 August  
**Barrie Richardson**

28 August  
**Heather Hopkins**



# A new handbag and red coat: What more does a girl want?

*A special travel feature  
by Heather Hopkins*

It was the perfect holiday. A trip to the UK to see my son, Iain, who lives in London, an 18-day cruise aboard the *Independence of the Seas* which far surpassed our expectations in luxury and service, as well as visiting nine ports in the Mediterranean, a visit to France to see some old friends – and, of course, a visit to my homeland Scotland ... what more could a girl ask?

Well, add into that the quest for the perfect leather handbag and red coat (both accomplished) and I have to say that the whole trip was perfect.

As Toastmasters, we learn the art of communication and visiting so many countries where English isn't the native tongue proved to be challenging – and exciting – in some unexpected ways. Thankfully, Iain still speaks with an Aussie accent and hasn't adopted the horrible English accent (you'll find that most Scots don't like the English accent), although he now pronounces certain words the English way in order to be understood.

London is now heavily populated with Indians and Asians, so we had challenges occasionally understanding what was being said as many of them still had a heavy accent.

Our time with Iain was wonderful in its own right. We stayed at his home - a large share-house with eight people from various parts of the world: England, Ireland, South Africa and Australia; a great group and lots of different accents.

We explored nearby market towns and

went to London pubs and the show "Wicked". Most importantly, we spent time with Iain and I was able to hug my youngest son who came close to dying 15 months previously. What a picture of health and happiness he is now!

The cruise part of our trip took us to Portugal (Lisbon), Spain (Palma De Mallorca, Barcelona, Cadiz), Italy (Livorno, Pisa, Civitavecchia, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Cagliari, Sardinia) and finally Gibraltar (where I fell in love with the monkey-sized apes – one of them deposited a 'gift' on my jumper!), which is now part of the UK.

We chose to avoid the tourist routes and walked for miles, chatting to the locals and exploring where the 'natives' live.

Train travel was quite an adventure as the larger train stations are like shopping malls and sell everything from clothes to washing machines. We were fortunate that, in most places, we were able to make ourselves understood – not by virtue of our foreign language skills (nil) as by the fact that many locals spoke a "leettle Englis."

## **Laziness begets a hot cup of milk**

We've become lazy in Australia when it comes to ordering coffees. If we want a *caffè latte*, many of us (at least me) simply ask for a *latte*.

If you do that in Italy, that's exactly what you'll get - hot milk. It was quite entertaining (frustrating, embarrassing) trying to explain to the waiter that we



*Above: Heather and Steve on board the ship  
*Independence of the Seas*.*

actually wanted coffee in the milk.

He refused to replace it and was heard muttering something like "*turisti stupidi*." Even though neither of us spoke any Italian, we got the message! After drinking two mugs of hot milk, we were careful to ask for *caffè latte* from then on.

I was excited to be trying out my four years of high school French (high school? It's so long ago that it's ancient history) when we visited my friends in France. On arrival, I had to act as interpreter for my husband Steve, as he was travelling on his American passport and there were a lot of questions from the non-English-speaking official.

I'm still not sure whether I told him that Steve was my husband, son or pet (he seemed amused) and what he made of my attempts to explain that we both

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## Luxuriating in the intoxicating accents

(Continued from page 4)

lived in Australia although I was travelling on a British passport and Steve an American one. He finally let us through. Thankfully our hostess spoke fluent English; however, I remembered enough to be able to order one of our meals in a restaurant and to converse with our non-English speaking host. His English was worse than my French, so a lot of our communication was borrowed from the Italians; lots of gestures. Nevertheless, Steve and Iain, whose French was limited to *oui* and *merci* were suitably impressed.

### What language is that?

Arriving in Scotland proved to be just as challenging language-wise for Steve. At security he was told to “*Aw richt, mun - putt yer jaikeet in yon baiskit and tak aff yer bult un shaes tae.*” Steve looked blankly at the man and asked me what language the official was speaking.

I quickly translated (*All right sir, put your jacket in that basket and take off your belt and shoes too*) before the official could take offense at Steve not understanding his perfect Scottish-English and refuse Steve entry.

It was intoxicating as we travelled around on the trains in Scotland to sit

back and simply luxuriate in the sounds of the Scottish accents all around us. I’m sure I grinned like a Cheshire cat the whole time – and Steve eventually became used to the faster pace of speaking and, for the most part, even understood it.

He was amused at how, from the moment we landed in Glasgow (the air is so much cleaner than London), I spoke much more quickly and reverted to using Scottish expressions he’d never heard before.

As they say in Scotland, “*Ye can take the girl outa Scotland, but ye canna tak Scotland outa the girl!*”

Steve had his first taste of haggis while we were in Scotland. He didn’t need to communicate his thoughts verbally – his face expressed his thoughts succinctly. Let’s just say that my cousin’s meal was safe from Steve’s fork.

### What price for love?

The quest for the handbag became a real experience in matrimonial communication. I quickly saw that Steve was baulking at some of the prices we saw (I ask you, what price a gift for the love of your life?).

When I window-shopped at a Rolex shop, the cheapest watch was



Steve communicating his thoughts about his first taste of haggis in Scotland.

EUR25,000 and I watched Steve turn a sickly shade of grey, I knew I had the Word of the Night (to coin a Toastmaster’s phrase).

From then on, every time Steve made a comment about the price of any of the handbags I looked at, I would simply say “*Mmmm ... I guess there’s always the Rolex watch if we don’t find the right handbag.*”

He would immediately turn his attention to finding the perfect handbag without being in danger of a heart attack at the price tags. This is a great communication skill to learn, fellow Toastmasters.

It was indeed a glorious trip – a fabulous combination of visiting Iain (saying goodbye was emotional) and extended family and friends, visiting European cities and having some wickedly indulgent time to ourselves on the ship – top-class food, entertainment and ambience and a visit to my old homeland.

As well as the memories and the hundreds of photos, I also have my new handbag (London) and red coat (Glasgow). What more could a girl ask? There’s always the Rolex ...

I love travelling to new places and my old home, Scotland, and yet I feel my heart swell when I hear the words in that famous Australian song:

“*No matter how far or how wide I roam, I still call Australia home.*”



Above: Heather with her son Iain in London.





### *Scots dance a wee happy jig at meeting*

The Scots ruled at May's international-themed meeting held at the Beerwah Tavern. They were extremely pleased they outnumbered the Irish of one (Judith), however the Chinese came in second with three representatives (Barbara, Barrie, Joan), and the Americans, with two from California (Kevin and Amber), one from Hawaii (Lorraine) and one from Tahiti (Robyn).

It was a fun day and Heather's Starter had members doing a "jig" from their representative country, which resulted in some hilarious moves. Penne's outfit was beautiful but as she couldn't quite work out what country she was from, she decided to be "international". Richard either forgot, or cleverly represented Australia, and came as he was.

Sue and Ian were pleased to finally be able to wear those outfits they bought on their Egyptian holiday while Patti had a great find in an outfit from an Asian friend and wore an Indian sari which fitted perfectly. - Sue Kruger







***Busload of enthusiastic Toastmasters head to Convention***

The mayor opened the District 69 Convention held in Inverell in May. Being a country town there was tremendous support from many local businesses, council and the RSM. In NSW not for profit organizations do not have to pay for the RSM venues. The council donated the use of the Town Hall and the gallery owners also opened on Sunday so that we could use their premises for educational sessions. Keith Doonan from Maleny won the Humorous contest with "Taming of the Tongue." Marieta Wetzig from South Burnett came third in the Table Topics so Central Division did well.

Shane Allan from Eastern Division won the Table Topics contest. The topic was "Imagine a better world." Jock Elliott won the International speech contest with his speech titled "Swimming with crocodiles". Previously he has won at District seven times and competed at the International finals five times. Perhaps this year he will follow Mark Hunter and become the World Champion. The evaluation contest was won by Trish Springsteen, a Past District Governor from Metropolitan Division. Central Division's contestant Lorraine Lehmann represented us well.

**- Coral McVean**



**Live on air in five minutes**

The message on my voice-mail was frantic. "Hari, where are you? I need your help!" I had just stepped out of a Youth Leadership course at the local high school. I listened to the lengthy plea asking if I could step in and do a radio interview for an upcoming workshop. "I have to pick up the kids from school and I'm not prepared for a live radio interview," the workshop trainer implored. "No one else is available. Can you please talk for me?" Just another Table Topics opportunity, I thought. "Of course, I can. When do they want to do the interview?" "In five minutes." I sat in my car in the Coles carpark, waiting for the program director to call me. "I'm putting you through to the studio now," she said.

**- Hari Kotrotsios**

[Click here to listen to the radio interview.](#)

*It's not how strongly you feel about your topic, it's how strongly they feel about your topic after you speak.*

**- Tim Salladay**

# This frog can be a real prince

Cellar Master Barbara Richardson doesn't drink. Instead, she called on internationally acclaimed wine critic Robert Parker Jnr (aka Barrie Richardson) to assist with her presentation at the club's June meeting. Barbara introduced three unique wines to members and offered them a sample taste.

**Arrogant Frog:** a Sauvignon Blanc that proudly embraces its Mediterranean origins. Drink it on its own at a cool temperature or serve it with seafood, sushi or fresh salads. Explore what a prince this frog can be.

**Dogajolo Rosso Toscano:** fruity and intense flavours with hints of cherry, blackberry, coffee, vanilla and spice. This young "Super Tuscan" wine is at its best with full-flavoured dishes such as pizza and pasta.

**Borgo Sanleo:** a beautiful dry white wine from Italy, satisfying on the palate with rich, fruity flavours and a crisp finish. It is excellent as an aperitif, superb with white meats and seafood.



## Who am I?

Outgoing Area 22 Governor Guido Schouteten (right) asks yes/no questions about his identity during a Celebrity Heads segment at the changeover dinner on 23 June. Hugh McVean and visitor Helene Ross from Kawana Waters club ponder their own character's identities.



Mercury's Motivators is an advanced club that meets along the Sunshine Coast from Caboolture to Noosa in fabulous venues such as restaurants, wineries, parks and country pubs. The club meets once a month, generally on the last weekend of the month, with meeting times varying between lunchtime and evenings. If you have leadership aspirations then come along and learn from the members who hold District positions. The program is stimulating, the company is riveting, the locations are superb and the food is to die for. All you need to join is to have achieved either your Competent Communicator or Competent Leadership award. Even if you have not yet achieved these awards, you are welcome to come along as a guest.

Contact the membership officer, Coral McVean on 5441 7820 or email [coralmcv@bigpond.net.au](mailto:coralmcv@bigpond.net.au)

**We're on the web:**  
<http://mercurys.freetoasthost.info>

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[www.toastmastersd69.org](http://www.toastmastersd69.org)

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