

Lion's Roar: Celebrating Our 30th Anniversary!

**By Lory Jones, DTM
Lion's Roar President**

For several decades, the Las Vegas Valley has gained numerous clubs that proudly maintain the Toastmasters mission of creating outstanding speakers and leaders. The trick, as any Toastmaster veteran will tell you, is to maintain those clubs with healthy membership.

Look no further than our Lion's Roar Toastmasters, Club 4905, which is celebrating our 30th anniversary on Wednesday, October 8! At Lion's Roar Toastmasters, the journey for members, new and long-term, is as much about growth as it is about community. For many, the club has become a space where nervous energy is transformed into confidence, and where personal and professional development is nurtured by the support of veteran members.

What makes a club last this long? Lion's Roar had an auspicious debut, thanks to its dedicated charter membership sponsors—one of whom is the undeniable captain of our ship, Damencele DiPasqua, the club's current Treasurer and Secretary. From day one, Lion's Roar exhibited professionalism, membership camaraderie and continuous quality. Through the years, the club grows with fresh new faces and voices. Friendships are formed and maintained.

Lion's Roar is also proud to have several members who are Division and District contest winners, published authors, an Accredited Speaker and even a Presidential Citation recipient.

Historically, Lion's Roar experienced some challenges. While MGM Grand's Director of Player Development department, Damencele had to convince Human Resources that, no, the Toastmasters emblem on the club banner is *not* the Teamsters logo. Then there was the location issue. Lion's Roar had met in the underground belly of the MGM Grand (hence the lion moniker). Easy for members to find, not so much for guests, where someone had to escort them to our hidden-away lair. Then when the hotel needed the room for its own needs, Lion's Roar was forced to seek other venues. Finally, thanks to member Mark Kemp, we have a consistent home right off Eastern Avenue—and it's even easy for guests to find this time.

Damencele noted that, while such challenges are cyclical, it pays to be tenacious. "Never give up and don't compromise on protocol or quality. Teamwork makes our dream work."

Here are some comments our club's members have contributed about their Lion's Roar experience—first the long-timers, followed by our newest members.

Philip Dahlheimer, a member for over 14 years, past club president and a District winner of the Evaluation Speech Contest in 2015 – "I had joined the club to learn how to sell myself better in job interviews. Lion's Roar gave me insight on how experienced speechwriters presented themselves in front of a group, which is similar to group interviews...Lion's Roar is my core club because they give me the camaraderie that make me feel welcomed."

Mark Kemp, a retired probate attorney and winner of several speech contests – “I joined Toastmasters at the direction of my business coach who wanted me to record my Toastmasters speeches to create content for my website regarding probate law. They are still posted on the internet...Starting and ending meetings on time is essential. Also, we have a great camaraderie among the members that is plainly seen by any guest.”

Laurie Childers, member 28-plus years, club Membership Vice President – “I joined Lion’s Roar to control my fear of speaking in front of people...I’m more open, confident, sociable, and participate more in many areas of my life, and I volunteer more.”

Huichi Olson, member since July 2024, club Sergeant-at-Arms – “Lion’s Roar stands out because of its strong core of experienced veteran speakers who are not only skilled but also generous with their time and mentorship. It’s a supportive, growth-oriented club, and I feel fortunate to be part of it.”

Nick DiArchangel, member since January 2025, club Education Vice President and first-place winner of Division A Tall Tales Contest – “Lion’s Roar provided a sense of familiarity and connection. . . There is a strong sense of community and support. It is no wonder members have returned year after year for ten, twenty, even thirty years. . . Lion’s Roar works so well for me for two reasons: their communication and planning. The club works to ensure roles are covered and that members are engaged, meeting them where they are in their Toastmasters experience.”

Sarah Knapp, member since May 2025 – “Lions Roar showed me great hospitality from a welcoming group of people. They exceeded my expectations by being able to give me constructive feedback while also showing grace on my Toastmasters journey. [They] gave me all the opportunities for each role and I liked that the group almost threw me into it. . . [Now] I am more aware of what I say and what vocabulary I use in a professional and personal setting.”

Julius Mabandos, member since May 2025 – “[Since joining], I am a totally different person and a lot of people notice it at work, including my supervisor and manager. I’m able to take on a much bigger, visible project with self-assurance and not be afraid to discuss/ coordinate with many people to make the project a success. . . Toastmasters doesn’t stop at the end of the meeting. It continues afterwards.”

Please join us in celebrating this momentous milestone on Wednesday, Oct. 8, at ViewPointe Executive Suites, 8275 S. Eastern Avenue, Suite 200, Las Vegas, 6 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.