

Toastmasters Treasures...Profiles in Performance

by Peggy Lynn, CTM/CL, PR Reporter

When you think the place you work is out for blood, think then again of District 22's

Rex Pawlak. Through Toastmasters, Rex has literally, been out for blood! It all started innocently enough back in 1992 when he first joined A2's **Sunrise Speakers.** He recalls that "it opened doors and started me down a road to remarkable achievements."

Rex initially LEAPed into the Communication and Leadership Manual, reading it "cover to cover." He immediately "set a goal to achieve an Able Toastmaster Silver award within five years." Achieving that goal would include completing that manual for his Competent Toastmaster (CTM) award, "nine advanced manuals, speaking to groups outside Toastmasters, judging Toastmaster speech contests, and serving as a district officer."

However, Rex discovered his targeted CTM was "affected," or rather, moved, by his "agreeing to speak on behalf of the American Red Cross -- seeking blood platelet donors." For months, Rex worked "the dinner tour" of area civic organizations and it paid off! Rex Pawlak was "the top blood platelet donor recruiter in the Wichita area for two consecutive years!" People obviously liked what he said and responded accordingly.

Then Rex was "bitten by the competition bug, and set a goal to win all four contests at the district level." He attended a judge's training session in Wichita after learning it was a great way to find out "what judges look for in a speech." Unexpectedly, that breakout training resulted in Rex actually becoming a "judge's trainer" - one who has now led "multiple" sessions himself, often placing Rex on the officiating side of Toastmasters contests.

"Attending District Conferences was a great way to meet other Toastmasters and establish valued friendships," according to Rex. "I was given the opportunity to present educational sessions at



**Rex Pawlak, District 22's
1997 Toastmaster of the Year**

several District conferences, and gladly accepted each one." Reminiscing, Rex believes "the old cliché regarding giving something to a busy person to get it done is really true." When he looks back on all the achievements he's accomplished, he's

amazed he was "able to get all this done."

Slightly hesitating to "give Toastmasters ALL the credit" for his achievements over the years, Rex does "recognize Toastmasters helped" him "achieve much more than [he] would have accomplished alone!" Rex does credit that fact as "the main reason" he's "still an active member of Toastmasters, with no intention of leaving!" He firmly believes "when you actively participate in the range of programs Toastmasters offers, there is no limit to what you can achieve! You must get outside the four walls of your club to get the full benefit of Toastmasters."

"Outside the four walls" of his club, Rex does indeed have a life. Living in Haysville, KS, working for Raytheon Aircraft Company the past 28 years as an Instrumentation Engineer, being married these last 24 years to his lovely wife, Janell, rearing a son, Jeremy, now deceased, and teenage daughter, Michelle, has not only kept Rex hoping, but enriched! Also, Rex expanded those "four walls of the club" to include membership in A3's **Semi Pro** and is a "perennial guest" and "unofficial mentor" of A1's **Beechmasters.** In other words, Rex actively participates in a club environment in EACH Area in Division A! Now THAT is basic support!

In 1995, Rex achieved half of his speaking competition goal when taking home the trophies at the

District 22 Table Topics and Evaluation contests. Rex concluded then that this was his "best time to become a district officer and accepted an appointment to Area A2 Governor mid term." He served a full term as Area Governor the following year and later was chosen "Co-Area Governor of the Year!" After that, Rex served as Division A Governor. Rex enjoys writing and has submitted two articles, which have been published in the Toastmasters Magazine. That was a lesson in perseverance as well as a goal. He said, "I must have called the editor about a million times trying to find out if they would run it." Career-wise, writing led to three technical papers for engineering symposiums and hosting a technical session.

Rex admits now, "While my achievements in Toastmasters have slowed, I am not standing still. I currently serve as President of one club, and recently received my sixth CTM award."

Regarding Rex's "goal to win all four speech contests," he's "still working on winning the remaining two. If all goals were achievable in our desired time frame, life might get boring!" according to Rex.

"Of all the things I have achieved, I treasure my friendships the most. I have friends in Wichita, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Manhattan, Leavenworth and other cities. They are what make me want to stay in Toastmasters forever!"

By the way, Rex has never been employed by the Red Cross, but is a volunteer. He practices what he preaches, or requests! He has made 308 donations of whole blood or platelets (30 plus gallons)! WOW! That is more than TWENTY human bodies' worth of blood! Rex proves we can all be blood machines for those in need!

Please join me in applauding the fine efforts of this District 22 gem, Rex Pawlak, ATMS, as he offers to us Toastmasters, literally "blood, toil, tears and sweat," those words from the great leader Winston Churchill describing all that he could give. What a TREASURE we have in Rex Pawlak! To learn more about him, email Rex at rex_pawlak@sbcglobal.net .