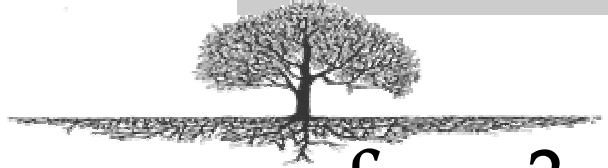




# Our Roots: Where did we come from?



Toastmasters CIPro  
Club, Area 14,  
District 60,  
Club 6682

## Ever wonder:

- Who started our club and why?
- Where did CIPro come from?
- What were the early days in Toastmasters CIPro Club like?
- What were some of the struggles and successes?
- How has our club changed since it started?

**Read this issue and  
find out!!**

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Special Edition

June 2003

**Written by: Evelyn Fan, VP Public Relations**

Compiled after interviews with: Matthew San (1<sup>st</sup> president of Toastmasters CIPro Club) & Ken Yue (2<sup>nd</sup> president of Toastmasters CIPro Club)

Where did we come from? It is a question that all of us ask at some point in our lives. We all have a desire to learn more about our roots. History is not simply nostalgia, but a chance to appreciate those who came before us, learn from them, and to help us to gain direction for the future. Perhaps many of us have recently joined Toastmasters CIPro Club, or perhaps we are a seasoned member. However, I am sure that many of our members do not know that our club has had a rich history, filled with many dedicated Toastmasters who have endured many struggles and successes that have helped to shape our club into the one that we know and enjoy today.

### Our Other Identity

Toastmasters CIPro owes its name to a computer organization with the same acronym (formerly called Chinese Canadian Information Processing Professionals (CCIPP)). It was started in the 1980's by a group of friends who were computer professionals. Our club's founding president Matthew San is a member and was an executive of the club. Because most of its members had come from overseas, English was not their mother tongue. Realizing the increasing importance of effective communications in order to be successful in most professional fields in Canada, Matthew decided to revive the Toastmasters club formerly known as CCIPP Toastmasters. This time around, CCIPP shortened their

acronym. So CIPro was born!

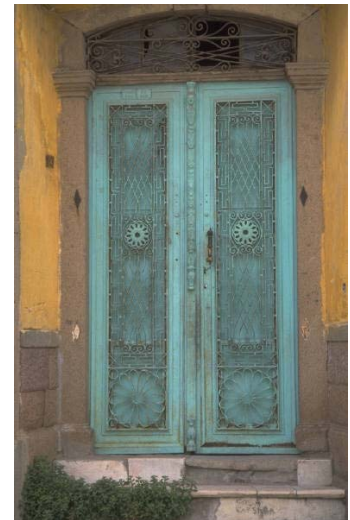
The first order of business was to find a mentor. Matthew and his wife Judy (who was a member of a Toastmasters at Scotiabank called Operation Orators) asked Ivan Watts (a dedicated member of Scarborough Toastmasters and a DTM) to help start and mentor our club. Matthew wrote a series of articles in the CIPro monthly newsletter to promote and invite members to come out to an information meeting. He also called friends and acquaintances who might be interested.

### A Club is Born!

In order to charter a new club, a minimum 20 members were needed. With only 12 members, a Speechcrafters club was started (new clubs are called Speechcrafters first until they get 20 members). It was a huge group effort! You could really sense the commitment within this group of people! The Speechcraft club ran for about five months, and finally...on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, the magic number of twenty was reached and Toastmasters CIPro Club was chartered with Toastmasters International!

### Location, Location!

In the beginning, the majority of members were from CIPro. The early days of CIPro Toastmasters were full of challenges. In fact, finding a place to meet was a challenge! The first Speechcraft was held at the Peanut



Plaza (Don Mills area) on Wednesday nights. However, there was a hockey rink below, making it a very noisy place to hold meetings. So after a few weeks, the club moved to a community center at the Market Village in Markham (the Chinese Culture Center of Markham). This move was the reason why the club was originally chartered as a Markham club. However, this location also proved to be problematic, as our club had to compete with rising rents and Chinese opera singing! How did we end up where we are today? Well, Judy San was on the Board of Directors of Yee Hong, and recommended the Yee Hong Center. But we weren't always in the room we are in today. Toastmasters meetings moved around to a few different rooms including an arts and crafts room (today it is an office) in the Yee Hong cen-



**“There was a strong sense of commitment with the early members”**



ter.

### Membership Woes

The first few years of Toastmasters CIPro Club were tough, since we had just made it to charter with 21 members. With at least 15 roles to fill in order to run a meeting, often, members had to take on 1-2 roles every week! The level of commitment in the club was high, since every single member had to be counted on in order to keep the club running! All of the members did their best to recruit members, including continuing to recruit through the original CIPro computer club. But it soon became apparent that we could not count on CIPro alone for membership. Thus, the club began looking elsewhere for members.

Back in those days, the club was quite creative in their membership recruitment! Raymond Fung, our VP of Public Relations created a website in the days when internet was relatively young, which really helped to put Toastmasters CIPro club on the map! Debbie Tien, our VP Membership publicized our club through the Chinese media (Fairchild TV), and even recruited a local Chinese TV station to videotape a meeting, which was broadcast on the local news! Our club was a hit and we had a large number of guests and new members. Our club grew rapidly and Judy found us the room we currently use. However, increased membership is not always a good thing as one year, we had over 50 members! The club was not prepared for this and it was a struggle to maintain a quality program so everyone could learn and benefit from it. During that time,

many people were just coming and going and the executive was at a loss for why people were joining and then leaving.

### Toastmasters CIPro Club: The Early Years

In the early days of Toastmasters CIPro Club, the members were very eager, enthusiastic and helpful! Because the club started with barely the mini-



Judy & Kathy at a CIPro Halloween party!

mum number of members needed to charter, everyone had to be very resourceful and helped each other out! Because the club was so small, most of the initiatives came from within. If someone wanted to try something, everyone worked together to make it happen. In fact, many of the traditions that are a part of our club are that way because someone had an idea and decided to implement it. In fact, our club's annual auction was the brainchild of Bill Sloan!

### The Value of Commitment

In terms of the speaking program, because many of the first members were new Toastmasters, in the early years, people weren't as confident in public speaking, so the more experienced members made a lot of speeches, because they wanted to keep the momentum of the club going! Matthew and Ken both recall the dedication of the early members, as a meeting was never cancelled! Even in a snowstorm, the meeting still ran, even with 8-9 mem-

bers showing up, taking on multiple roles! Everyone relied on each other a lot! CIPro's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> club president both commented that there was a strong sense of commitment with the original members-- commitment had to be 100% or the club would fold.

### The Value of Adaptability

If there weren't enough members to fill the roles, it wasn't uncommon to have to improvise and have a modified meeting! This could include anything from having a debate, someone redoing their icebreaker on the spot, and Ivan would always give an educational speech on the spot! Something was always done so that members who came could benefit from it and would not be penalized for coming to the meeting. The early presidents of Toastmasters CIPro Club also had their share of rough spots, as the club had to draft new rules and procedures, in addition to those given by Toastmasters International. These rules were drafted and have evolved over the years and include rules about the guest book, rules for lateness, club library, number of sergeant-at-arms, etc.

### The Value of Mentorship

Toastmasters CIPro club would not be where it is today without excellent mentors like Ivan Watts and John Sooran who devoted many years to mentoring our club. Both of them came regularly to CIPro to help get it started, fine tune it, help out with roles, toasting, parliamentary procedures, etc. Their commitment was there for us, and CIPro is blessed to have learned from the best, because both of their contributions helped to set a strong foundation for the club we know today. Since then, Ivan and his wife moved to Vancouver a few years ago, and John was our Area Governor last year, and will be taking on the role of

Division B Governor in the coming year.

### Fun Times

But many exciting things happened in CIPro as well, including a marriage! Raymond Fung and Jenny Lau met in our club. A romance flourished and they eventually got married! In the early years, our club also had a baseball challenge with Speakers Club, and it became an annual summer activity! Ken Yue, Toastmasters CIPro Club's 2<sup>nd</sup> president recalls our club's huge charter party held at a Chinese restaurant in Markham attended by over 200 people from other Toastmasters Clubs, family and friends!

### Party Time!

Back then, the club was also more social and found constant reasons to hold parties, which included Christmas parties, Chinese new year parties, Halloween parties, and of course the Year-end Party (which our club still runs annually). Our club also held a bridal shower for Jennie and My Nien, a farewell party for Ivan Watts when he and his wife moved to British Columbia, wedding anniversary party, and a club anniversary party. Toastmasters CIPro Club's 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary party was held at a huge warehouse with a stage and a rebuilt Chinese studio setting (North American Studios on Bullock Dr.) and resembled a Chinese King Fu movie. It also had separate dining facilities and Ken recalls that about 200 people showed up! The members loved to have parties and any excuse to celebrate, they would throw one! As a consequence, many of the members formed close friendships within the club and became like extended family to one another.

Some of the characteristics that made Toastmasters CIPro Club different from other clubs was that back in those days, their membership profile was mostly Chinese, although the meetings were

conducted completely in English. Being in Scarborough, over the years, it continued to remain predominantly Chinese, although in recent years this has been changing as Scarborough becomes more ethnically diverse, which has added to the diversity and richness of our club.

### Achievements

In the early years, due to the club's lower membership numbers, Matthew's primary objective was membership recruitment. But as membership grew and stabilized, Toastmasters CIPro Club discovered that they had some quality speakers as they began to collect various ribbons and awards! Then the club began to focus on trying to produce some solid speakers that they could enter in speech contests to represent our club. Some of the club's early talent included: Winnie Liu, Pearl Jerome, Simon Tam, and Sarah Tsang-Fahey. Many of these speakers advanced to the area level and some even made it to the division level!

Its hard to believe that almost 9 years have passed since the birth of Toastmasters CIPro Club. Although our club has evolved and grown so much since then, some things never change: the dedication, teamwork, friendship, and commitment to excellence in communication and leadership skills that are as much a part of our club now, as it was 9 years ago. Though many of them are no longer with the club now, the spirit and vision of our founding members, who pioneered Toastmasters CIPro Club will never be forgotten!

Last but not least, a toast! Let us all rise,...and raise our glasses...to "Our Roots! May we cherish them always and continue the proud tradition of the Toastmasters before us!"



Matthew at one of CIPro's Halloween parties

***"Many of the members formed close friendships within the club and became like extended family to one another."***



After a meeting in 1995



After one of our club's famous Christmas parties! (Matthew, Judy, Simon's family & Sarah's sons)

**TOASTMASTERS CIPRO  
CLUB, AREA 14,  
DISTRICT 60, CLUB 6682**

We meet Wednesdays @  
7:15pm at the Chinese  
Evergreen Manor  
(Yee Hong Center)  
2319 McNicoll Ave  
(Southeast corner of  
McNicoll & Midland Ave)

Publisher

Kitty Lau, President

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Evelyn Fan, VP Public  
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Joe Chang, Assistant  
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**Dates to Remember**

- Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 1993 First demonstration meeting (tried to get interest). It was held at Scarborough Civic Centre by Operation Orators (Scotia Bank).
- Jan 18, 1994 First organizational meeting held at Oriole Community Centre (for anyone interested in getting the club started)
- Feb 16, 1994 1<sup>st</sup> Speechcraft meeting held at the Markham Chinese Cultural Centre, Market Village
- July 27, 1994 1<sup>st</sup> meeting held at Yee Hong Center
- Sept 16, 1994 Celebration dinner banquet to commemorate Toastmasters CIPro Club being chartered, held at Palace Seafood restaurant (Hwy 7 & Warden), 200 people attended.

The "Original" Cast of Toastmasters CIPro Club

**President:** Matthew San

**VP Education:** Ken Yue

**VP Membership:** Sau Ying Yu

**VP Public Relations:** Alice Cheung

**Treasurer:** Ernest Chan

**Secretary:** Try Chhe Heng

**Sergeant-at-arms:** John Lam

Judy San, Kien Chai, Raymond Fung, Mika Takaichi, Keith Yeung, Steven Truong, Annie Wong, Wyman Chu, Simon Tam, Jennie Lee, Patrick Lamp, Alick Siu, Wilson Yik, Nancy Chan



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**President's Page**

About Toastmasters CIPro Club's 1<sup>st</sup> President

Matthew San is an IT recruiter and a member of CIPro. He is also the founder of Toastmasters CIPro Club, which along with his wife Judy, was started for the CIPro (computer club) members. Matthew was there in the beginning from 1993 when he tried to revive the original Toastmasters Club (that was started in the late 1980s). When the club was chartered in 1994, he resided as President of the club from 1994-1995. Then from 1995-1996, he took on the role as Past President and remained a member in the club until 2000. During that time he achieved his CTM, ATM-B and CL. Even after he left CIPro, his heart has always been with the club, and as a proud parent, he always enjoys seeing the club grow and flourish. To this day, he still keeps in touch with old club members and frequently attends our year-end parties!

About Toastmasters CIPro Club's 2<sup>nd</sup> President

Ken Yue was a member of the CIPro computer club and was a member of Toastmasters CIPro Club since it was chartered in 1994. Toastmasters helped Ken in her career, as it gave her the confidence to deliver successful financial planning seminars. It was actually after she delivered a presentation that her manager told her that her technical content was good, but her presentation skills could use some work. Her boss recommended she join Toastmasters! Then she saw an ad in the CIPro newsletter about a Toastmasters club that was starting and the rest is history! From the year 1994-1995, Ken served as Toastmasters CIPro Club's first VP Education. Then in 1995-1996, Ken served as the club's 2<sup>nd</sup> President, and from 1996-1997, she took on the role of Past President, and then remained a chartered member until 2001. Since then, Ken has achieved her CTM, ATM-B and is now an accomplished and polished speaker. She has also volunteered her time as a coach in the Vision Youth Leadership, and other youth Toastmasters program. She cherishes her time at Toastmasters, where she formed close friendships and met some wonderful people!