



Aloha District 49 Toastmasters!

The year 2020, for me has been an exciting year that has been juxtaposed with both happiness and sadness, clarity, and ambiguity, yet steadfast and guided by a Vision and Goals that kept me as an individual on track. In the beginning we had set dates for our conference, speech contests, meetings at every level of our organization and things were moving according to plan. The first half of the 2019-2020 Toastmasters term was stellar. Our vision, "Soar" was accepted by the membership and we moved forward. Then COVID-19 entered our lives.

The second half of our year was initially certainly different from the first half. It was filled with division, confusion, misunderstandings etc. Our conference was postponed, our speech contest was initially cancelled, and meeting formats changed when I ordered the membership not to meet in person until June 1, 2020. At first people were upset, thinking I had jumped the gun. However, I stood my ground against opposition. As a district leadership we continued to move forward.

We had to live our Vision of "Soar." We had to Prove to ourselves that we could be better. We continued to work hard and innovate as we made small steps forward. Our world became virtual which opened District 49 up to not only ourselves, but to the world. The small steps became larger steps until we realized we were running and were back in the race.

We regained our Wind, we “Soared” as we moved forward. Our Speech contest was back; our Convention was back; our Officer training program was back; our Divisional meetings were back and with full quorum for every meeting. District 49 not only survived COVID-19, we found a cure, it is called togetherness and living with hope. We are Toastmasters and Symbolically, District 49 beat COVID-19!

Based on our combined efforts, **District 49 is a Distinguished District.** As of this writing we are the only District in Region 2 that is Distinguished. We became distinguished in all areas, Membership Payments, Paid Clubs, and Distinguished Clubs status. We reached this goal because we stayed the course, followed our Vision, and met our Goals while under the most diverse deplorable conditions imaginable. The only time Toastmasters International cancelled a Convention was during World War 2. The COVID-19 year will go down in history as the second time Toastmasters International cancelled a Convention.

This year also has a new milestone for Toastmasters, it is the year that District 49 Soared to new heights as a collective membership and reached the top as an Ohana! We clearly showed what teamwork can accomplish. It is with Great Pleasure and joy that I thank all of you for granting me the opportunity to Serve as your District Director for the 2019-2020 term.

I pray all of you Enjoy your 2020 Conference! You earned it. You are the Best!

Mahalo Nui Loa,

John Coleman, ACG, CL
District Director