

# Oshawa Toastmaster moving onto regional competition

## Another speech, another victory

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**DURHAM** - Smooth talk has taken David Hooker around the world; next, he hopes it will take him to the finals of the Toastmasters' international speech competition.

A Port Perry resident and Oshawa Toastmaster, Mr. Hooker is the first from his division to make it to the semi-finals, or regional level of the competition, which will be held in June. His advancement comes after placing first at the club, area, divisional, and most recently, district levels.

"He's a very dynamic speaker," said Ed Andrews, president of the Oshawa Toastmasters. "He has a great stage presence and I think that's what helped him win it."

With 35 years' experience as an

international motivational speaker, Mr. Hooker got involved in the competition for a new challenge and learning opportunity.

"The standard was exceptionally high," Mr. Hooker said. "I was lucky to have won."

"One of the speeches was a very funny one, I think it was called 'Even Hitler had a Girlfriend,'" he continued. "He had me sitting there, thinking 'man, this guy is good'."

Under the provided theme motivation and inspiration, Mr. Hooker's speech 'Wine on the Rocks' has taken him this far, but he will have to come up with a new one for the next competition. Speeches have to be five to seven minutes long and body language is a big component in the judging process.

Watching time slip away during the speech makes the competition much different than his job as a speaker, Mr. Hooker said.

"The clock is a big set of traffic lights right at the back," he ex-

plained. Watching the lights go from green, to amber, to red, while keeping the audience interested and dealing with the scrutiny of judges, is a lot of pressure, he added.

"No matter how much research you do, when you actually go and hit that stage, you're looking into the whites of their eyes," said Mr. Hooker.

"It's very much like a stand-up comic, but a serious one."

Eight speakers presented to an audience of more than 300 people at the recent competition.

"When you're up against unknown opponents, originality is important, but you can be original with topics that have been out there for centuries," Mr. Hooker said.

"It's amazing, no matter how many years you've been doing what you do, you always learn," he added.

If Mr. Hooker wins the semi-finals, he will advance to the world competition this fall.



David Hooker smooth talked his way into the semi-finals of the international speech competition.