August 10, 2009

Mayor of Lewisburg John Manchester joined Martha Hilton and Mark Hudnall at the New River Toastmasters’ Charter Celebration on Tuesday, August 4.

Toastmasters Celebrate Charter at New River Community and Technical College


Newly appointed president Martha Hilton welcomed members, visitors and the press to the commemoration of this milestone of the organization, which is sponsored by the college.

Toastmasters International is dedicated to the training and development of public speaking and leadership skills. Guest speaker Mayor of Lewisburg John Manchester spoke of the importance of these skills in his opening remarks, relating his experiences with ninth grade speech class and how it prepared him for being at ease with people and gave rise to his understanding of the importance of being able to communicate your position effectively. He discussed the significance of being able to relate to your audience – whether it be 500 members of the Christian Motorcycle Association or the U.S. Congress.
“Anxiety is always there, the adrenaline rush is there, you learn to work with it,” he said, adding that he applauded the efforts of Toastmasters and the valuable service they offer the community.

New River Toastmasters member Mark Hudnall explained to visitors the ins and outs of the organization, giving a rundown of the training manuals and procedures of the club.

“Toastmasters is all about giving you confidence,” Hudnall noted. “Toastmasters helps you give a little of yourself to the audience.”

“It’s totally different from what I thought Toastmasters was going to be,” added Hilton, whose father had been in Toastmasters when she was young. She pointed out that it is a group that is suited for all walks of life, calling it a “varied sort of group.”

Past-president Vanessa Wykle remarked that the group has been a great benefit to her both personally and professionally. Wykle, who admits that she has never had a problem with speaking in public, initially joined to improve her grammar skills for work, but found that she also gained skills that helped her maintain control and convey her point more smoothly, even with her children. “This group helped me be a better mom,” she said.

After hearing all the speakers and member testimonials, local author Belinda Anderson, one of the curious visitors who came to the meeting after reading an article in the paper, declared “those are the kind of skills I’d love to have.”

For more information on New River Toastmasters, contact Martha Hilton at 304.667.7060.

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