



Talking Point

The Toastmasters Club of Berne



<http://besu.ch/bernetoasters>
Meeting at the Restaurant Galaxy,
Effingerstrasse 20, Berne (City-West),
next on August 26, 2002, 18:45 - 21:30.
Visitors welcome (no cost, except supper.
You are not forced to speak!)

Volume 10, Issue 4
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District of Continental Europe
District [59p](#) Area [4](#) Switzerland
Toastmasters Club of Berne [#3436](#)
President: Rodrigo Guerra 031 849 2052
Editor: [Graham Tritt](#) 031 829 3479

The Meeting of August 26

We had a busy meeting, with 10 members and 9 guests. The countries which provided the most persons were France and Ethiopia, each with 2 present. You can see the list from the Table Topics responses.

Graham (VP Education) ran a brief business meeting. Stefan (VP Public Relations) provided posters and asked members to post these wherever they find a suitable place. Rene (VP Membership/Treasurer) explained the membership costs: 60 for previous members and 90.- for new members for the period up till December 2002. He asked people to pay with postal payment form or through bank transfer.

Pamela as Toastmaster of the Evening asked guests and members to introduced themselves, and today we also used name cards in front of each person.

Rodrigo is in New York, and Graham provided him with a list of clubs in Manhattan. We hope that Rodrigo gets the opportunity to attend one of two meetings there. Obiomo is leaving for to Dublin soon, and we found 4 clubs in the central city area, so we also hope that Obiomo will find a new Toastmasters home and will be able to finish his CTM this year as he wishes.

Meeting Assignments

Role	26 Aug	9 Sept	23 Sept
Toastmaster	Pamela	Graham	
Chief Evaluator	Stefan	Vicko	Debate
Table Topics	Obiomo	Contest	
Speaker 1	Lydia	Marianne	Graham
Speaker 2	René	Rodrigo	Vicko
Speaker 3	Graham	Lydia (2)	Lydia (3)
Speaker 4		Juliette (1)	
Speaker 5		Philbert (1)	

reply by email or call 031 829 3479 to register

Further information

President Rodrigo Guerra, guerrameyer@freesurf.ch
VP Education Graham Tritt graham_tritt@hotmail.com
VP Public Relations Stefan Bogdanov bogi@freesurf.ch
VP Membership René Massas r.massas@bluewin.ch
Sergeant at Arms Vicko Andria macmimi@hotmail.com
Past President Pamela Holzinger 031 352 4357
Web site: <http://besu.ch/bernetoasters>

Next Events

Monday September 9: meeting - Table Topics contest

On 9 September we have the annual club Table Topics contest. In this, each person will be given the same topic to answer. Every member can take part. The winner may represent us at the Area Conference on October 26 in Geneva. Last year our rep was Obioma, who then won the Area contest in Basel and spoke for Switzerland at the District conference in Hamburg.

Monday September 23: meeting in Neuchatel

We have a club meeting in Neuchatel instead of Berne. Only 30 minutes away by auto or train. - but consider taking a day to visit the interesting Expo02 site in Neuchatel. We vote on whether we do this.

Tuesday October 1: demonstration meeting at BIT,

Titanic II, Monbijoustr. 74, Tram 9 / Sulgenau, 1215.

Monday October 14: meeting with Humorous Speeches

and visit by Roy Skinner, Area Governor

Saturday October 26: Alpine fall conference, Geneva

Monday October 28: normal meeting,

theme "speeches from the underground"

Monday November 9 and 23: meeting

The Speeches

Lydia gave her first speech in the club, what we call the *Ice-Breaker*, in which we learn about herself. She described to us New York - a large state with two small islands in the southwest corner where a lot of people live, Long Island and Manhattan. Lydia has retired after 35 years as a school teacher and is now living a vacation life in Switzerland- walking in the alps, sketching, taking photos, and quilting, and as well spending time in Long Island with her husband and daughter.

Rene's speech was titled *The Power of WOM*. As Vice-President for Membership, he explained why we always need new members -some people move away, others change jobs or lifestyles, and we need to replace them as well as to grow as a club. We like new insights, and to hear about others' lives, experiences and ideas. And the best way to convince someone to come is by **WOM - Word of Mouth**. Nothing beats the personal touch, as members explain the fun and the benefits they are getting.

Let the Power of WOM be with You!

Due to lack of time and team planning, Graham decided not to present his role play *Hidden Agenda*. For details see the presentation on April 2000, on the club home page under [Workshops](#).

Table Topics

Table Topics were presented by Obioma on the theme of Africa. Some were difficult, some easy (for guests to try).

Why is Africa neglected? Hans, a member from Germany, has spent several years as a manager in Nigeria. His explanation was that business-wise, it is uninteresting - there are no profits to be made! Aid may be good for the short-term, but is long-term destructive.

Which is worse - a military regime, or a "sit-tight" ruler? Philbert, a new member from Ghana, explained that both types have done bad for their countries, but some have done well. Those who stay too long tend to lose their way, and new ideas are always needed.

If you win a holiday package, which country in Africa would you visit? Julia, a guest, from England, told us that she had visited many, but her favorite is Mali, with a fantastic range of cultures, peoples and landscapes.

Which leader in Africa do you admire the most? Krist, a guest from Belgium, spoke of Nelson Mandela - how after decades in prison he could return, forget the past, negotiate with his oppressors, and lead his new country as a statesman.

What do you think of the charter for the African Union? Lydia, a new member from the USA, regarded the AU as a useful step in the right direction, and the European Union could be a good model.

How can poverty be eradicated? Mary, a guest from Singapore, decided not to answer this one. Politicians have also not been able to solve it!

Do you think corruption is a general problem in Africa? Lisette, a new member who has business and personal ties with Nigeria, pointed out that corruption is a general problem, not specific to Africa.

Why is AIDS becoming a major problem? Christian, a guest, from Switzerland, pointed out two reasons - the people are not informed about it as we are, and they do not have the means to counter it.

Two warring countries have approached you for advice and aid. What would you supply? Rene, our French member, said - he could make more money with arms and ammunition, rather than food and medicaments. He would try to get them to the negotiating table, to see each other's positions, and then give them help.

What impression does African art have on you? Pamela, a member from Sri Lanka, has seen various types of art as expressions of the way of life of African peoples.

What type of African music do you like? Stefan, our musician from Bulgaria, finds the rhythms fascinating. It may take a while, but it will shake your heart and soul, with a power that recalls prehistoric roots and the Earth.

If you have a million to invest, what would you do?

Graham, our New Zealand member, would first put it in the bank and pay himself fees. He would use it as "seed capital", to provide means for people to help themselves. He described simple technologies - pumps, solar-powered refrigerators, radio - and some money would be for seeds.

Does African dance appeal to you? Juliette, a new member, finds the rhythm quick and the body movements so agile, the dancers are much more spontaneous than we are. She asks Obioma to explain it to us!

If you were a world leader, what would be your gift to Africa? Michelle, a guest from Ethiopia, would provide hospitals, medical and housing services.

What is the best time to visit your country? Mehret, another guest from Ethiopia, explained that it was always summer in her country, so any time is a good time.

Is African culture mis-represented or misunderstood? Vicko, a member, from Madagascar, found it sad that TV and marketing showed mostly the spectacular things, and do not ask the Africans what is the deeper meaning.

Evaluations

Each prepared speech is evaluated by another member, who emphasizes both the good points of the delivery and also areas which could perhaps be improved. This is always done with constructive suggestions and encouragement. For detail see the club site, [Evaluations](#).

We do not comment about the content of the speech - the only time we have this is at the bar afterwards!

Hans evaluated Lydia, commenting that she obviously had experience, confidence, and enjoyed taking the stage. He felt that even if the speech is short and the content clear, it is still necessary to take a minute in the introduction to tell us what we are going to hear.

Vicko evaluated Rene, appreciating in particular a good preparation, a natural body language and a pleasant voice. He recommended more variation in speaking - pitch and speed, using pauses more and speeding up or slowing down in parts. The word WOM was a mystery to him for a long time, so that perhaps it could be projected at the beginning of the presentation.

Juliette as timer reported that only husband Rene went on for too long! Philbert reported that Lydia was the champion at saying "um" and "aah", and that Rene had achieved a null score!

We voted for **Best Table Topic**, and the votes were well spread with 4 people getting 2 votes and two getting three: **Lydia and Rene**.

General comments from the guests were that it was great to see such a wide range of cultures. Krist and Julia said they had had no idea of what they were going to see! Philbert was amazed and pleased to find how much everybody knew about Africa and how interested they were in the continent, contrary to what he had expected.