



Talking Point

Toastmasters Club of Berne Newsletter



<http://www.besu.ch/bernetoasters>
Meeting at the Restaurant Galaxy,
Effingerstrasse 20, Berne (City-West),
18:45 - 21:30. Guests welcome, free.

Volume 11, Issue 4
September 8, 2003

District 59 Division E Area 4
Toastmasters Club of Berne #3436
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Allan: Table Topics Champion! at the Area Event on 31 August

The first Area Social and Training Event was hosted by the Geneva club with a barbecue for over 30 people at the home of Peter Drew, president. The afternoon began with drinks and snacks for 12 attendees at a training session led by Graham as Area Governor, continued with an open Table Topics session, more drinks, barbecue, salads, cheese, etc. Two from each club competed in the contest, where the topic was "if you were to come back as an animal, what would you be, and why?" Allan with one of his jokes was judged as giving the best presentation. Marianne was unplaced, but then this was her first ever participation in a contest.

Meeting of 8 September

Tonight we had a normal meeting, with 12 Toastmasters attending and 2 guests: Lourdes Martins and Joe Kubaink.

We had one prepared speech, the second project from Rachel, on the topic of Words, explaining how we can use the Latin and Greek origins as an aid to learning and understanding vocabulary. Graham then led an interactive workshop, a project of the ATM manual for Discussion Leader, which he called a Cafe Philosophique. Toni presented Table Topics on the theme of Summer, and the evaluations rounded out the evening.

Roles

Role	9 September	22 September
President	Rodrigo	Rodrigo
Toastmaster Evening	Rodrigo	Graham
Speaker 1	Rachel	Rodrigo
Speaker 2	Graham	Marion
Speaker 3		Stefan
Speaker 4		
Table Topics Master	Toni	Vicko
Sergeant at Arms	None	
General Evaluator	Allan	Rachel
Speech Evaluator 1	Vicko	Barbara
Speech Evaluator 2	Rodrigo	
Timer / Counter	Vicko	
Chief Judge		Graham
Judges HS		
Judges TT		
Grammarians	Andreas	

Future Events

Monday September 22: Meeting with German-language speeches and Table Topics! We will hold the Impromptu Speech contest and Speeches in German. The evaluations and other parts of the meeting will be in English. These contests should decide who will represent the Area E4 at the Division Contest in Stuttgart on 11 October.

Wednesday October 1: French-speaking contests at Geneva. Anyone who would like to participate in a French workshop (*Présentation humoristique* or *Concours d'Improvisation*) at Stuttgart or Lucerne should give their name to Graham, and participate in the contest in Geneva.

Wednesday October 8: Humorous Speech Contest (in English) at the Lausanne club meeting.

October 11: Division Conference in Stuttgart. Make a special trip to the capital of Baden-Württemberg.

November 7-9: District Conference in Lucerne. Details are on district59fallconference.toastmastersofbasel.net

Division Event 11 October

The first Division meeting is hosted by Stuttgart on Saturday 11 October at the Generationenhaus, Heschl. Some of us will travel up on Saturday and back on Sunday.

- 0700 Pickup near Berne Bahnhof
- 1230 Lunch together then the conference
- 1730 German and French workshops
- 1830 End of conference
- 1930 Visit to the Stuttgart Oktoberfest
- Overnight accommodation may be arranged
- 0930 Morning relaxation in a thermal pool
- 1900: arrive back in Berne

The cost for the conference is Euro 20=Fr 30. We will car pool and the transport will cost about Fr 20. Accommodation is available with local Toastmasters if you reserve early to officers@toastmasters-stuttgart.de. Hotels are Euro 20-80.

In the evening we will visit the world-famous Cannstatter Volksfest – see <http://www.cannstatter-volksfest.de> (free entrance; beer and chicken, fun park rides ... In the morning we can relax in the thermal pools at Leuze <http://www.stuttgart.de/baeder/xml/xsl/stat149.html>

Please tell us if you are thinking of coming. We hope to have 10 or more members attending from each club! For details: <http://www.toastmasters-stuttgart.de/divcon.html> or get the registration form at the meeting.

The Origin of Words - Rachel Rohrer

In her second manual speech, Rachel explained how she uses knowledge of etymology to help learn and understand new words. She gave examples of modern words with Greek and Latin origins and how meaning and pronunciation can both shift over time.

Cafe Philosophique - Graham Tritt

Prepared as always to fill in a gap, Graham used his recent experience at a Berne Philosopher's Cafe (first Sundays) to organise a special session, following a project Workshop Leader from the ATM manual Discussion Leader.

We proposed two topics for discussion and voted to choose: *how can we make good decisions in a flood of information*. In a first step, Graham defined the problem and all members assisted in analyzing it in detail and in defining criteria for making decisions. For instance, local / regional / global effects, short and long term, number of people and environmental and financial costs. Graham summarized the criteria and then proposed a definite problem to be solved: changes required for Swiss farmers due to global warming. Members proposed actions and used the criteria to decide on their relative importance of these solutions.

All participants were enthusiastic about the methods, how a general discussion can be structured and how problems can be analyzed and solved by a group within a short period.

Summertime with Toni Weitz

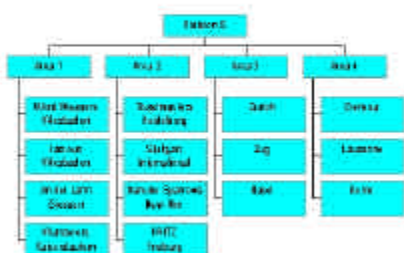
Toni presented Table Topics on the theme of summer, picking out a range of interesting questions.

At the age of 16, Andreas enjoyed a summer hiking back and forth across Switzerland. *Allan's favorite season* was winter, since he was 18 he has loved skiing. *Joe's worst holiday* was riding a bicycle in New Zealand, the distances were too great, the roads too rough and the hills too steep.

Rodrigo would prefer to go to the Bahamas and enjoy the sun, sand, rhythms and music, tasting exotic foods and meeting interesting people. *Vicko* believes in the clichés of summer, in romance and dreams of vacation.

Rachel proposed introducing the concept of *Siesta* to Switzerland, and described how the benefits outweigh the inconveniences.

Division E



Is God a Woman?

We held another exciting debate - the Berne club holds debates two to four times a year, and we challenge Lausanne and Geneva clubs to visit! (Next: Valentine's Debate, Monday February 16th). The rules and judge's guidelines are on our web site www.besu.ch/bernetoasters.

The Positive Team, of Toni, Rachel, Andreas and Lourdes, supported the view that God is a Woman. The Negative Team of Rodrigo, Joe, Hans, Graham and Vicko opposed this view, and all made their plans during the dinner break.

Two speakers were chosen to present each team's side. **Toni** opened with historical "facts" and tried to persuade us of the natural femininity of creation and roles leader and peacemaker.

Absurd, prejudiced, sexist and egocentric was this view, in the opinion of **Graham**. There is not one god but many - for sun, moon, rain, sky, fire, ... and both these and spirits are not female in themselves. For many, there is no god, or we make one as a projection of our ideals, and we do not need to personalize an abstract concept.

Andreas supported Toni and spoke of Mother Nature and Gaia, the female organism of the world. If we mirror our wishes, we want a loving, caring god, a mother.

Hans pointed out that nature is mighty and destructive too, more like a man, also creative and powerful. The idea of fatherland was just as strong. And since man have ruled and dominated through history over women who suffered terribly, it simply proves that god cannot be a woman!

The judges discussed the different presentations and the teamwork involved in presenting arguments, supporting, refuting, and summing up, and concluded: **The Negative Team was the winner! God is not a Woman!**

In the judges' opinions, Graham and Hans had had an easier time because they were able to draw on many alternatives, but regardless of arguments, their delivery had more confidence and power. In Toastmasters debates, the prize is not for logic but for presentation.

Evaluations

Vicko evaluated Rachel, encouraging her to use more voice variation and perhaps fewer examples but discussed more deeply. It would have been easy to involve the audience, and to respond to their interest with her convincing views.

Andreas remarked that Rodrigo gained his inspiration from the ceiling and Hans from the floor! Graham noted their rhetorical use of phrases by Rachel and Hans.

Guest Lourdes found the wide range of topics discussed and styles during the evening extremely stimulating. The meeting was very structured but the atmosphere positive and encouraging. Joe was pleased to take part, saw an opportunity to improve his English speaking abilities, and said he was sure to return.

Rodrigo implored us to come by 18:45 to help planning.