



District 59

# Clarion

## District News And Events

December 2011

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### Dear fellow Toastmasters,

when you are reading this, you see a big leap forward has been achieved. Great teamwork made this Clarion, which I hope you will find as amazing as I do. From this edition on, we have a new chief-editor for the Clarion, Annica Nordin, she will be assisted by Thomas Koetzsch, proofreading is done by Christopher Magyar and Peter Kenton. I am really happy to have these fantastic people in one team to produce with you the Clarion. Yes, you got it right. I mean YOU. Every Toastmaster is invited to contribute an article for the Clarion. In this edition it is the fun and learning in conferences. In the Public Relations team for our District we still have some job openings. We need supporters for EasySpeak. At the moment not every Division has at least one supporter. The EasySpeak Admin team looks for a Training Coordinator. This is someone who takes care of gathering training material for EasySpeak. And a PHP & MySQL specialist is needed. All these great people in the District teams help you to have an outstanding Toastmaster experience!

Best regards,  
Erwin

### District 59 Fall Conference – eye witness reports

#### Basileo, Basel, Bâle, Basle, Базель, Bazylea

This issue of the Clarion is dedicated to singing the praise of Toastmasters Conferences in general and the one in Basel in particular. As Basel has a different name in almost all our district languages, the writers have found different things to bring up from the conference.

Area and division conferences can be just as inspiring and that is the subject of Sandra's and Lise-Lotte's article.

I have been to a few conferences, although not to Basel, but I can recognize the feeling of joy, inspiration, commitment and excitement along with the sadness when the conference is over and we part. The only consolation is that we'll meet again at a district 59 conference in the future.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Annica Nordin, Toastmaster from Sweden's second town, Göteborg. My first district conference was the one in Göteborg. Then I had the privilege to support my very good friend Lena Fredriksson at the humorous speech contest in Hamburg (she came in 3<sup>rd</sup>). I also attended the conferences in the Hague, Barcelona and Lisbon. No doubt I'll be among the first to register for the Poznan event.

Annica Nordin, Göteborgs Talarklubb, Sweden



Ellen Hermens, DTM

President's Distinguished District Governor 2009/10  
Toastmaster since 2003

Ellen is an active speaker with a passion for training and delivering motivational speeches.

As trainer and coach she focuses on her clients' strengths and authentic, professional public speaking. [www.speech-coach.de](http://www.speech-coach.de)



## We are Family

*Ellen Hermens, Effective Communicators, Munich*

„Oh, hello, how are you – we haven't seen each other for ages...“ My favorite time at conferences is the arrival phase in the lobby of the hotel. I see that I arrive in the Friday morning and then sit in the comfortable lobby and don't have to wait long for the first Toastmaster. This rush and welcoming is most fun to me. You now may ask what about the excellent educational sessions or the fantastic food or the crashing competitions. Oh, yes, I enjoy that a lot as well as the grand gala dinner and the luxurious locations of the district conference. Only – to meet and greet dear friends, and in some cases kind of family, is the best!

### Exotic

I remember my first district conference – of course I knew only a few people – a handful from my own division and at first went to stick with them. But I tried to gain more and make new friends. So at the gala dinner I deliberately sat at a table on which I knew no-one. Best decision: we shared experiences from our clubs. Did you know that at Toastmasters meetings in Spain they serve food and beverages? As a German Toastmaster this was a totally new concept for me. Whereas for Edith it was unthinkable not to. Soon we chatted about other topics as well and shared a lot of exciting stories.

The next conferences I already knew more people than only from my division and the number kept on increasing: Toastmasters are a communicative bunch of people. I especially love to hear from other cultures and listen to other points of view.

### Networking

And it is not only fun talking to others – the conferences increased my network. In the beginning I asked people about club issues like how do you get more visitors to your club to gain more members. Meeting so many experienced Toastmasters I got not only as answer to conduct a special program like one of the Success/Leadership series (e.g. Effective Evaluations), but I got a variety of answers and reports how this worked out in their club. Toastmasters are fond sharing their best practices. Later when I became the District PR officer I had a network of people to support me: I got articles for the Clarion, some volunteered to proof read them and more. Networking is a key to success.

When I see what other people gained from this network: Mel Kelly and Florian Mueck once created an evaluation form which can be used easily for evaluation contests – at a gala dinner (on a napkin). Dirk Löffelbein and Hadrian Lutogniewski travel a lot to all kinds of places in Europe. Christopher Magyar keeps on supporting demo meetings with his expertise. I know that speakers like Bill Monsour, John Zimmer and Jack Vance are invited to speak at events all over Europe. And not to forget the couples who got to know and love each other at Toastmasters' conferences, but that is a story for another Clarion article.

### Feel good

So what can this network be for you? Besides fun, sympathies and good feelings you can visit your international friends and support them at Club Officer Trainings or at division conferences: Visit places all around Europe. You get resources of experience – in a variety you can't imagine. Whatever challenge you face you find inspirations and best practices how to come across it in the Toastmasters family. So when will you attend?

When you do be sure to come to me before the conference – let's meet in the lobby of the location – expand your (and my) horizon!

## Egg-shocked contestants

*Colm Kehoe, Alicante TM Club, Area H3*

Having met up with some fellow toastmasters from Portugal and introduced myself to new friends from Basel, at 10.00 on Saturday morning, all eyes were on the table topics contest.

The room was jam-packed and the Contest Chair called everyone to order. Having set the scene for the competition by discussing rules and procedures, everyone was waiting for five of the candidates to leave the room while the first contender headed to the stage. However, there was something strange in the air because the conference chair asked all six candidates to leave the room. A volunteer was then invited to the stage to help demonstrate the table topic. To our complete amazement, the topic contained no words at all – it involved an egg being planted in the hand of the shocked-faced volunteer. Just in case the topic was misunderstood in any way, a second egg was planted in the other hand. This topic was either sheer genius or completely insane – how would the candidates respond?

A highlight of this competition was watching the shocked expressions on the faces of candidates when they realised the topic. However, the level of answers was top notch. As candidates opened their minds and let the words flow, we heard stories about chimpanzees, rock stars and recipes. One candidate even quoted Hamlet's famous soliloquy from Act One Scene Three of Shakespeare's play of the same name: "To be or not to be, that is the question!" and reinvented this iconic quotation in the context of the two eggs.



**Dyane Neiman**

## Respect

Anyone who attends contests like this can only have the utmost respect for all the participants. Table Topics is probably the most difficult challenge in Toastmasters and to see fellow Toastmasters such as the finalists in this competition presenting their topic so fluently and powerfully is an inspiration to all of us. Congratulations to all participants – it was worth travelling all the way to Basel to see you. Of course, special congratulations to the winners: [1] Tamara Joyette; [2] Jo Ann Broger; [3] Vera Orac – three really cool customers who set the bar for all of us.



**Katarina Kultanova  
Kovalcikova**

## What do women really want?

At 17.00, the conference room was full again – the excitement was enormous – it was amazing to be there – the humorous speech contest was about to begin. Again, six quality speakers were scheduled. The Contest Chair got things going with a humorous introduction and shortly afterwards, the contest began. There were some incredible scenes during this contest – a contestant wearing male shower-room clothing, another removing hair from his leg, another picking up a woman on stage. The humour was excellent – a mad scientist who wanted to rule the world, a woman trying to find out what she doesn't know she wants, a contestant who didn't know what going to the loo meant. The quality was first-class and it was a genuinely magnificent experience to be there.

The winners were: [1] Katharina Kultanova; [2] Manjana Saleh; [3] Jorge Crespo. Katharina's speech was as impressive as they come – she spoke with a beautiful smoothness and kept the punch lines coming right throughout. It was incredible. So was the speech by Manjana. Few will ever forget her unique performance as the mad scientist. Jorge Crespo must be congratulated as the only man to win a prize in either of this year's English competitions and as such can justly call himself the number one man in Europe. His speech about male shower rooms was funny, clever and expertly delivered.



**Selma Yar Rose**

## Well Done Basel

The Basel conference team did a wonderful job and I applaud all of you for your great work. I learned a lot from attending this conference and I am already looking forward to seeing some more great speakers in Poznan – in fact I have already watched their elegant video on the conference website aptly named: "We're waiting for you!"

**Photos: Hadrian  
Lutogniewsky**

## The Basle Report

*Thomas Koetzsch, Zurich Toastmasters, Area E2*

**“This was one of the best District Conferences I ever attended ...” was one of the sentiments expressed by some of the people who attended the District 59 Fall conference in Basle from November 25th to the 27th.**

300-odd participants descended on The Ramada Plaza Hotel in Basle for what was termed a session of excitement, inspiration and laughter – or if you like the longer title – the Humorous Speech and Table Topic Contests in English, French and German but there were also lots of workshops, a Gala Dinner and lots of dancing.

Following the Conference Opening in English, French and German – mind the French really sounded great but I didn't understand a word because my French language skills are rather non-existent.

The first part of the finals of the English humorous speech contest took place that evening, but more of that later. Following the German and French table topic contests some of the Conference's participants went out for cheese fondue – a typical Swiss national dish. This dish turned out to be so popular that the restaurant ran out of cheese.

First thing on Saturday morning was the German humorous speech contest. I wasn't able to listen to all of it, as I was also at the helpdesk, but one of the speeches I heard was about a talk on humanity, which the speaker said also included women - what an interesting notion.

But the highlight of Saturday and that happened even before the English humorous speech contest was the Guggemusik the organisers invited to play for us just after lunch. I suppose the English-only speakers would call it a brass band, but as most will remember it is a good deal more than that.

If you get a chance you should visit the Basler Morgestraich on February 27th and you will hear lots more of it. Best be there early because it starts at 4 a.m.

Later that afternoon Kamran Derakshan gave an excellent workshop on a Table Topics survival kit. I feel generally fine speaking off the cuff but a lot of people have a heart attack even before their name is called. I think Kamran gave some excellent advice and examples on how to become a TTUPERMAN.

Following a keynote address by Ted Corcoran, a past International President, on “Where Leaders are made”, we geared up to the final in the English humorous speech contest.

I listened to some excellent speeches – in my next life I would like to become a mad scientist – the judges no doubt had a difficult decision to make.

What I found hilarious though is that John Zimmer who chaired the contest mentioned during his opening speech that the Euro had been devalued and that those who had paid in Euro would have to come up with some extra 20-odd Euros. On Sunday morning several people approached me at the help desk intending to pay the extra amount.

Saturday ended with the traditional Gala Dinner and dancing which lasted well into the early hours of Sunday.

On Sunday morning participants could choose between a wide selection of workshops, nine in total in English, French and German. The Conference closed just after noon. All those who didn't have to leave immediately still had the opportunity to join one of six groups for a sightseeing tour of Basle.

All told the whole weekend was a rather splendid affair with lots of kudos going to the organising team of Erika Markl, Gabriela Graf, Natalia Filchakova, Celine Horan, Maria Rosa Laplace, Kamran Derakshan and Thomas Schneider.

Thomas Koetzsch

ACB, CL



“What motivates a team of volunteers to organize an event of this scale and efficiency and what attracts such a diverse and dispersed group of people to spend three days together in a conference centre?”

## I stand in awe

*Jim Murdoch, Zurich Toastmasters, Switzerland*

We occupied the entire third floor of the Radisson hotel tower, a thirty floor tower, in Basel, in the city's most important congress center. On exiting the lift I was greeted by officials wearing their official ribbons and ID badges who directed me to the registration tables. Registration was quick and efficient. I was given my name-badge and directed to the cloak-room area and shown where the conference rooms were. The meetings were run efficiently and the timing was impeccable. Each presenter and speaker knew exactly his or her role, how long they had and when to finish. Photographers and film makers were circulating among the crowds and recording key moments of the conference. I was meeting people who had travelled from all over Europe, from Portugal to Poland. Was this a top global concern bringing their representatives and customers in from all around Europe, and whose well paid and well trained team efficiently planned every detail and knew the details of every guest arriving?

### Professional non-professionals

The astounding answer is "No." This was not a professional group with a paid organizing team. Neither was it a commercially motivated enterprise. This three day event in November 2011 was run by volunteers and attracted over two hundred and fifty attendees from around Europe to a top event unequalled in any commercial undertaking. Welcome to Toastmasters International District 59 Conference of Fall 2011, my first district conference.

What motivates a team of volunteers to organize an event of this scale and efficiency, and what attracts such a diverse and dispersed group of people spend three days together in a conference centre? Three words answer this question: Fun, Acquaintances, and Development.

As this was our annual Humorous Speech and Table-Topics contest the fun was already programmed. The speeches were full of fun and laughter as were the rather surprising table-topics, especially when the contestants were presented with two eggs. Even more fun and surprising was what the contestants did with those eggs. But fun was what everyone was having even apart from the contests. People were having fun meeting other people, other Toastmasters who all shared a common goal, personal development.

### Organizing skills

I saw familiar faces, people I had met in Frankfurt at the District Officer Training. I also met new people from faraway places. But all of these, coming from different backgrounds, different careers, different levels of career and business, all were there because of the value of personal development which Toastmasters gives them. And coming together at such an event as this highlights why we joined our local club in the first place – to help us stand and speak in front of a group of people. But there is another side of this development which often goes unnoticed and even taken for granted and which TMI, I believe, are trying to re-emphasize in the recent rebranding, and that is the leadership training.

Simply observing how this event was organized and who organized it left me with a sense of awe. Apart from the organizers we had contest judges, counters, timers, sergeant at arms, registration officials, official greeters etc., all showing responsibility and exercising leadership. Because the best leaders are those who lead, who go before and demonstrate. My praise goes to all those who participated to make this event one to remember, and who did so voluntarily. And now for the next conference!

Jim Murdoch  
Area E1 Governor 2011-2012  
[www.losttomeaningful.com](http://www.losttomeaningful.com)

Connect with me on all my networks  
<http://xeeme.com?r=3EFOyQBPD89>

## Area and division conference – to attend or not attend

*Sandra Wickman and Lise-Lotte Kolmberger, Lundby Toastmasters, Göteborg, Area G2*

"I won.....! Happy or scared? Pleasure or terror?"

My next assignment was to compete at the Area Conference and try to represent my club."

This feeling tortured us both. Us being Lise-Lotte Kolmberger and Sandra Wickman from Lundby Toastmasters, Gothenburg. We didn't attend the same conference and we have different experiences from them. But we wouldn't miss it for the world!

### Sandra

The Area conference that I (Sandra) attended had good practical exercises more or less all the time one didn't get any chance to relax which is good, as it doesn't allow you to get nervous. You get to know other people and after having sung happy birthday with your tongue hanging out you're not very worried about what else they throw at you □ By the way the tongue thing was to relax your vocal cords!

There were no dull moments, lots of energy and lots of laughter both at your own mistakes but also laughing together with others and sharing each other's success and progress during the weekend left me feeling so proud of us all.

I gained so much by challenging myself to perform. To stand on the stage (my biggest fear) and actually feeling comfortable at the end of the weekend was a rush that I can still feel now as I'm sitting thinking about it.

### Lise-Lotte

I, Lise-Lotte, attended the Area Conference the year before. I can't truthfully say I paid ALL my attention to the first seminar, but once I had done the first competition, my nervousness disappeared and I started to listen.

I had the pleasure of listening to Lance Miller on various subjects. One of the seminars was on the topic "develop your club". He told the story about how they turned his club around, from being only 6 members left to one of the largest and rewarding clubs in just over 2 years (if I remember correctly).

By that time, I had never considered being on the board – I was in Toastmasters to improve my speaking skills. At the conference I never actually said to myself "go on the board" but when I got the question if I could consider being on the Board 2011-2012 I never hesitated, I wanted to help our club develop and grow! I assumed the President role and boy, have I learned new things this autumn!

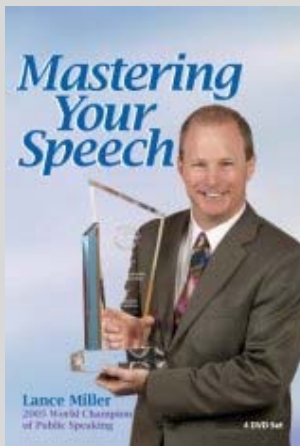
I won our club contest, and you, Sandra, came second and sighed a sigh of relief knowing that you wouldn't be the one to compete, but don't ever trust place "runner up" ...!

Things have a way of happening and before I, Sandra, knew it I was on my way to Stockholm. Afterwards I was so pleased that I had dared take the opportunity to learn.

And I, Lise-Lotte, hope that my turn on the board will improve the club a little and have us take the next steps towards gaining more members.

### Give it a try!

We both agree that attending the Area Conference really gave a lot back. If you are reluctant in attending – give it a try! Who knows, you might really enjoy it, learn some new stuff or even get to know some new Toastmasters!



## “It’s a small, small world ...”

*Cindy Piccolo, Toastmasters of Basel, Switzerland*

### Fellow toastmasters

Have you ever had the experience of hearing a song and then it rings in your head for hours and maybe even days after you heard it last? This is what I experienced when I visited Disney Land many years ago, “It’s a small, small world” being the ear worm that plagued me throughout the entire time we were there.

During the Fall District 59 Conference in Basel, while enjoying a delicious lunch in the Filou restaurant of the Ramada Plaza with fellow Toastmasters it happened again...someone sang the lines „it’s a small, small, world...” although this time my response was an Ah Ha moment instead.

It dawned on me how connected I was with my fellow Toastmasters. I first attended a Toastmaster Fall Conference in Hamburg a few years back; I made new friends and acquaintances from my fellow Toastmasters at this event. I learned to appreciate the words Fellow Toastmasters as I was starting to feel joined together, and more like I was in a big family.

This year was no exception. I was happy to meet and greet the people who had made my first conference such a wonderful time. And now I was hosting one of them in my home, as the dear friend he has become. One simple phone call he made to suggest I consider getting assistance with easySpeak turned into a friendship and a Toastmaster mentorship that is lasting to this day.

As I looked around the event, it was dawning on me that many of the Toastmasters were happy made acquaintances from Clubs in Switzerland and abroad. In the lobby of the hotel I was introducing myself to Toastmasters who had banded together with Peter Kenton and lunched together years before at the conference end. It was fun to see the lights go on as they discovered why I knew their names!

### Romance in America

Sitting in anticipation for the Humorous Speech Final, I was lucky enough to be seated next to a toast eating Toastmaster from Poland, who I discovered had gone to America to meet his wife and come back to his country and eventually marry. I too had gone to America to discover my life partner and then come back here to marry. I met his

lovely wife at one point and it felt like I had completed a circle. Later I saw him on the big screen with his toast eating debut welcoming us to Poznan, Poland for the Spring Conference.

There seemed to be a small world theme coursing through the air as I discovered that the District Governor and I hail from small towns in eastern Washington. She was inspired by our Conference Keynote Speaker, Ted Corcoran, to become a Toastmaster and run for a District office. My partner discovered that the Training she had taken in Belgium a few years ago and from which she was highly encouraged to become a Toastmaster ended up being good friends with the District Governor and the reason we were even Toastmasters!

“One simple phone call he made to suggest I consider getting assistance with easySpeak turned into a friendship and a Toastmaster mentorship that is lasting to this day.”

### The purple color

On Sunday, as the conference was winding to a close, I sat in the front row enjoying the workshops. A lovely woman wearing a purple sweater caught my eye, as I too had contemplated wearing purple that morning. I chatted with her outside for the break over coffee and soon we discovered

that she has a student from her country in my school and in my classroom! We had to laugh over this as we walked to the next workshop.

Learning how to debate was a rollicking and raucous event. At one point, the only Toastmaster contestant who made it to the International Level walked in and joined our side. She had a quick wit and was able to shout down the Nay Sayers and make a point and points for our half of the room. Later I was to hear that she had hosted the easySpeak bear to a grand night in Basel, on loan for the evening from my dear friend. I can hear you singing it now, it’s a small, small world....sorry, I know....

To complete this circle of friends and acquaintances, at the end of the day many ended sitting together in the Sky Lounge at conferences’ end. Who would have guessed I would be sitting sandwiched between Ted Corcoran, and Peter Kenton enjoying a beautiful view, spending time getting to know one another better and discovering the world of a Toastmaster is indeed friendly and a small world after all.

## Babylon in Basel

*Ineke Vermeulen, Munich Prostrmasters*

There are two ways to explain what defines “babylonic times” – the most common one is that state of utter confusion, where everybody speaks a different language and misunderstandings abound. The other – alternative – version is that of a situation where people from different countries find themselves trying to communicate despite language barriers.

### Our lingua franca: English

The latter is most vividly present during each of our District 59 conferences. Now, of course, we all communicate on the first level in English. Well, no, we don't – we do use some sort of English as common language, but between the three official contest languages (English, French and German) and the countless other languages spoken by the participants – from Finnish to Hungarian and from Dutch to Polish to name but some of the less exotic ones – the conversations one overhears while navigating the conference are rarely conducted in purebred English.

I count myself lucky to speak more than one of the European lingos and to be able to understand large parts of some more, yet anything East of German just sounds like gurgling to me and when I hear the number of vowels any Fin can effortlessly pronounce in one breath I'm nothing short of baffled.

### What if Sarkozy and Merkel ...

However, this is Europe, and if anything, our conferences also help me understand why the European Union is at best united in confusion. Just imagine Merkel and Sarkozy both communicating in English – make that Denglisch and Franglais – no wonder we're in a jam!

I found my perfect Babylon in Basel somewhere else: on the dancefloor. Alright, there usually isn't much talking on the dancefloor. Yet, dancing somehow always reminds me of the famous words of Mae West “I speak two languages: English and body”. I totally agree with her that body is a language in itself... And I don't mean the project #5 stuff – support your (orally communicated) message with the way you move on stage – nonono, I truly mean what I say: body is a language that can make words superfluous. Especially on the dancefloor.

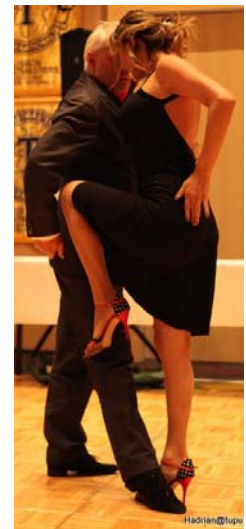
### Latin rhythms or cool techno

And that brings me to a little theory I thought up. Body language, like other languages, is related to culture. Meaning: if your culture is English, your language is English, your body language is English. Same with French, Dutch, German, Polish etc. What I discovered though, is that apparently, the skills to learn foreign languages and those to learn foreign body languages are different. That is why the dance floor is such a cool place to observe: some Latin dancers can dance perfectly well to German techno, without knowing a Wiener from a Hamburger and at the same time, totally under-cooled ice-babes from the Scandinavian countries might dance in true Ritmo de la Noche style without knowing how to say bom dia.

I think my theory will require a lot more forensic study on the dancefloors of many a District 59 conference to come. I won't regret it, because it is the type of field-study I really like and if the DJ's of the future are anything like the DJ we had in Basel, I guarantee we will be in for great shows of Toastmaster eloquence in Poznan, Köln and (probably) Antwerp! The conferences will be great and we will all find a common (body) language to go with the music.



My theory: There is a different body language for every culture, an English body language, a French, a German and a Polish one





Left to right: Philippe Christin, contest chair, Lucienne Romani of Frانس parleurs Munich, Regina Hochenegger of Darmstadt, Charlotte Mellot of Eiffelturm Paris, Elena Sollewijn Gelpke of Berlaymont Brussels and Sebastien Carrière of Verbissimo Geneva.

## Five on Stage

*Kareen Naude, Darmstadt TM and TM francophones with help from Jean Nasr of Agora75 Paris and Marc Tournon of Lutèce75 Paris*

The French contests which took place in Basel from 25th to 26th November 2011 showed how important it was for the French-speaking Toastmasters to be present this year on district level and how determined they were to organize quality contests on that level.

Thanks to the determination of the division governors from A and B (Belgium, France, Luxembourg), E (Switzerland), F (Rhineland), I (Munich) and very much involved organizers, these contests could only be a success. The preparation gave us the opportunity to update the French website and to create a friendship network between European French-speaking Toastmasters members.

The humorous speech contest was conducted by Philippe Christin, and its jury by Marc Tournon, 2 new DTMs for year 2011. Philippe has been serving our organization for 39 years till now !

The Table Topics and Humorous Speech Contests took place in a good atmosphere with the presence of a large audience (around 1/4 of the conference participants) to support and encourage the 5 candidates, the best of their divisions for the French contests.

The winners of these French contests came from 4 different countries. So you can appreciate how many people have an interest in the French language...

November 2012 will be the next time to showcase the district French contests in the German town of Bonn, which is preparing this event under the motto of Joy ! Joy ! from the 9th symphony by Beethoven, the composer born here.

So don't miss it and come all to the French contests at the Fall Conference November 2012 in Bonn so that we could again organize and share with you quality French contests at district level !

## Cinq en scène

Les concours français qui ont eu lieu à Bâle le 25 et le 26 novembre 2011 nous ont montré combien il était important pour les francophones d'être présents et leur détermination à organiser un concours de qualité à l'échelle du district cette année.

Grâce à la détermination des gouverneurs des divisions A et B (Belgique, France, Luxembourg), E (Suisse), F (Rhénanie), I (Munich) et d'organisateur très engagés, la réussite de ces concours était programmée. La préparation a permis de remettre à jour le site francophone et de créer des liens d'amitié entre les membres Toastmasters de langue française à travers l'Europe.

Le concours de discours humoristique a été mené par Philippe Christin, et son jury par Marc Tournon, 2 nouveaux DTM de l'année 2011. Philippe a cumulé à ce jour 39 ans au service de notre organisation !

Les concours d'Improvisations et de Discours Humoristique se sont déroulés dans une bonne ambiance avec un public venu nombreux (environ un quart des inscrits de la conférence) pour soutenir et encourager les 5 candidats respectifs, meilleurs orateurs de leur division pour les concours français.

Les vainqueurs de ces concours français venaient de 4 pays différents. Vous pouvez ainsi vous imaginer combien de personnes s'intéressent à cette langue...

Novembre 2012 sera l'occasion de remettre les concours francophones du district à l'honneur dans la ville allemande de Bonn, qui prépare cet événement sous le thème de la "Joie ! Joie !", extrait de la 9ième symphonie de Beethoven, originaire de cette ville.

Aussi ne manquez pas cette date et venez nombreux participer aux concours francophones qui auront lieu à la Conférence d'automne de novembre 2012 à Bonn afin que nous puissions encore une fois organiser et partager avec vous des concours français de qualité au niveau du district !

## The Skeptic's Imagination:

### Why I Almost Missed Out

Olivia Coker, Zürichberg Toastmasters, Zürich, Switzerland

I tried to get out of attending the District 59 Conference in Basel. It was too late.

When I find something I like, I get rabid about it. Last February, I wanted to join a debate club, but there are none in Zürich, aside from a student club, so a friend suggested Toastmasters. We both visited, but I am the one who joined, and within two months, I was Sergeant at Arms, beating out the droves vying for this HIGHLY coveted role . . .

While I was still in the first flush of my Toastmasters romance – scientists equate this stage in a relationship with temporary insanity -- our club president mentioned the Basel conference in a leadership meeting. I rushed home, flipped open my laptop and registered for the full package, the early-bird special.

Summer approached, and outdated information led our club to believe that the eligibility requirement for the fall contests was the same as for the International Speech Competition: six Competent Communicator speeches. We found out only two weeks before our club contest that this was not true. My preparation standard – evolved through two decades of classical singing – overrode my enthusiasm, and I knew I would not feel confident conjuring up a contest-quality speech with only two weeks of owl labor.

Like most Toastmasters, I consider myself a performer, not just a seat-filler, and the inviting glow initially surrounding the conference began to wane. When nobody from our club won at the area contest, the glow dissipated entirely. Cheering on my children in their concerts that same November weekend began to appear more crucial to my overall happiness than attending the district conference, which was promoted wholeheartedly in our October 4th club meeting, but afterwards nearly forgotten.

The temporary insanity of my early Toastmasters romance was gone. I fell from insanity peak into disillusion canyon, where reality looked darker than it really was.

In fact, I had watched a few videos which made me deeply skeptical of the speech quality awaiting me at the conference. I envisioned a hollow spectacle of overblown form and no substance.

The workshops did not entice me either. Feeling irretrievably inept at the elevator speech, I have avoided Table Topics at my club, and I imagined NOTHING could eradicate my dread of it. As for the other workshops, the term “motivational speaker” brings to mind an oily phony who spouts clichéd sound bites to a crowd of credulous simpletons: three things you MUST KNOW to succeed; five



things you MUST AVOID if you want to be happy; seven steps to attract the man of your DREAMS.

I sent two separate emails to cancel my conference registration.

Somehow, the cancellation never came through. In the meantime, I was now committed to those family concerts, and I had a work project due. I decided to make the trip from Zürich to Basel on Friday after work, skip the gala dinner and return to Zürich for concert one. Then I would catch the last few workshops on Sunday, leaving early for concert two. At least I could say I was at the conference, and I could report back to the club on anything of nominal value.

I missed the Friday contests, but managed to hang up my coat in time for Florian Mueck's workshop “From Passion to Profession”. It was immediately obvious that he was professional and prepared. Alright, at least he valued the participants' time and money and was serving up his best “motivational” effort.

By the time he bowed and left the room, I had crept out of disillusion canyon to the foothills of commitment again.

Florian was authentic. Without smarmy emotional manipulation or a slick success scheme, he told us about the setbacks and disappointments he had suffered as he struggled to make a living, finally, as a professional speaker. He gave practical tips on how to network, establish credibility, and break into the speaking business. No magic beans, just advice for people willing to work thoughtfully and diligently.

**Revelation one**, the workshops: practical, useful knowledge.

To my amazement and secret chagrin, I would have something constructive to discuss during dinner.

But the SCOPE of the event still had not hit me. Are you aware that District 59 is currently comprised of 213 clubs in 18 European countries? I was not.

When I entered the banquet hall for fondue, and there were no chairs remaining, revelation two struck.

Are you aware that district 59 is currently comprised of 213 clubs in 18 European countries? I was not.

I dragged a chair over to a table of four, and quickly became submerged in a happy weekend of making friends. It was not a business conference, where everyone is on his best behavior. It was not a city party, where you have to rummage up something to say that has a fifty percent chance of being amusing or intelligible to a complete stranger.

I have never attended such a large event where launching a conversation was so effortless. Everyone was there to listen, learn, possibly to perform, and certainly to exchange Toastmasters experiences. I discovered that vast numbers of advanced Toastmasters are successful entrepreneurs. Intriguing.

**Revelation two**, the networking: lively, sympathetic, and instructive.

I still had not seen a contest when I staked out my chair Saturday morning for the English Table Topics Final. When the Contest Master pulled out an egg and informed us that it, THE EGG, was the Table Topics “question”, I simply braced myself for calamity. The poor, unwitting contestants were going to be reduced to dribbling, dumbfounded non-starters, and I was going to catch an early train home.

Could it be that by avoiding Table Topics I was cheating myself out of acquiring one of the three essential Toastmasters skills?

One by one, eleven apparent geniuses rolled out, claimed the stage with presence and poise, and deftly expounded on egg recipes, egg tricks, the meaning of life, the characters we choose, Columbus’ pitch to Queen Isabella, and so on, and so forth.

Were they all card-carrying Mensa members? Or could it be that by avoiding Table Topics I was cheating myself out of acquiring one of the three essential Toastmasters skills?

When I attended Kamran Derakhshan’s “How to Speak off the Cuff” workshop, I realized it was the latter. Months before, I had read the “Impromptu Speaking” manual from the Better Speaker Series, but the little method outlined in it had not convinced me for one second. Magic beans.

I had to watch it work to believe it. To my knowledge we had not employed a technique for approaching Table Topics in our club: either a member had the gift – as many do – or she slunk back over to her chair in shame after rambling inanely for an eternal minute. The Tables Topics finals proved that the technique was effective. Hope, at last!

**Revelation three**, the finalists: inspiration, the reason to go on.

By the end of the day, I regretted that I had to miss the gala dinner and dancing – I love dancing! At least a grateful Dutch lady was able to use my ticket, since the dinner had sold out long before.

I attended other insightful and relevant workshops, and learned that all of the presenters were volunteers. They were advanced speakers who had profited so much from Toastmasters that they generously took the opportunity to return the favor. The Division E organizers also belied their own volunteer status by their professional department, navigating from room to room to host each activity in English, French and German.

Joining a Toastmasters club introduces most of us to a supportive public-speaking environment for the first time, and for a while, we can learn all we need within the bounds of our own thirty- or forty-person club. But once we have broken the first siege of stage fright, and have learned to craft and deliver a basic speech with relative comfort, it is time to brave a wider circle of adventure and training.

Three days in Basel endowed me with three revelations: practical knowledge and coaching from established speakers, friendships with people from all over Europe, and far-reaching inspiration from witnessing how much skill I have yet to develop.

Compete in the upcoming International Speech Contest! If you are not ready for that, register for the spring conference in Poznan anyway (May 25-27). I registered again, the full, early-bird special.

Be a skeptic, and then prepare to be most pleasantly surprised.

*Olivia Coker is the owner of Articulate Intelligence, a communications consulting business.*

Be a skeptic and then prepare to be most pleasantly surprised

## Why should we go to Poznan? Why should we attend a District Conference?

*David Sen, Prostmasters and Effective Communicators, Munich*



Last week I was asked spontaneously to answer these questions at a Toastmasters meeting. It was just like Table Topics. Walking to the stage my mind started going through the many wonderful reasons looking for the best... should I talk about the inspirational speeches or the excitement of the competition, about the insights into how Toastmaster works and the recognition of all those passionate people who work behind the scenes to ensure it carries on working?

Perhaps I should talk about the wonderful, interesting people we meet, the social events or about the warmth of hospitality from our hosts, people who are proud of their country and of their city and want to show the best side to their guests and how we are so lucky to live in a district with unrivaled diversity, conferences were in The Hague, in Lisbon, in Barcelona and in Basel.

These are **all** excellent reasons to attend our conferences and yet, climbing the steps to the stage, I realized it was the workshops which have made the most lasting impact on me.

### Storytelling

Even before the conference I was excited to see that Peter Zinn was giving a workshop. Peter has an international reputation as one of Toastmaster's great story tellers and attending his workshop I realized why he has won so many awards for his speeches.

In his workshop he shared with us how to discover that treasure chest of personal stories which each of us has, stories which will resonate with our audiences, and to use them to build great speeches. Judging from the dozens of toastmasters taking notes at Peter's workshop, we can expect more wonderful stories thanks to Peter.

### Powerpoints

Dermot Greene is another talented story-teller and so I was delighted to hear he was giving a workshop. However, I must admit that when I saw it was a workshop about better use of Powerpoints I groaned. Having seen so many "death by Powerpoint" business presentations I remember the boredom of being bombarded by bullet-points. How wrong I was! Dermot showed how skilled selection of slides can make your message effective and memorable.

He said "As a photographer, I've adopted the cliché "a picture paints a thousand words" as the goal for each photo I take, it needs to either tell a story or at least contribute to it. I find that Powerpoint is great for visual storytelling and as we know stories (verbal and visual) are the best way for us as speakers to ensure that our message is memorable."

Dermot proved that anyone can create powerful effective Visual Presentations. In the interests of all of us who regularly watch business presentations, I wish that attending one of Dermot's "Pimp My Slides" workshops would be made compulsory for all Powerpoint presenters.

To learn how to give better presentations visit <http://www.geekspeakingtraining.com>

### Passion

Florian Mueck successful author and expert in the field of "Inspiring communication for Leaders and Teams" is a role model for many of us Toastmasters, because he has successfully transformed his passion for public speaking into a profession. As he said to me after the workshop:

"Since I started in 2009, it hasn't felt like work once. I guess, this is what happens when you turn your passion into a profession. It feels like a Toastmasters meeting that never ends. Public speaking is my hobby, public speaking is my passion. This is what my clients feel and appreciate. Apart from the passion factor, clients say that they like a lot my love for people and the ability to focus on the strengths and potentials of each and everyone individually."

His passion and love for his work is evident in everything he does. His inspiring workshop showed us the steps to follow his path. His positive, dynamic energy, combined with his practical experience-based advice and creativity helps his audience take action.

For more about Florian and his life transforming book "*The Seven Minute Star*" visit [www.thesevenminutestar.com](http://www.thesevenminutestar.com)

### Approach for virtual meetings

Lars Sudmann is a leading expert on Communication and Leadership in virtual environments, an award-winning trainer and coach and is 5-times Belgian Speaking Champion of Toastmaster.

Lars gave us valuable insights into the differences between normal meetings, where you can see and interact with your audience, and virtual presentations, where a radically different approach is required to engage your listeners.

This is one of the most important skills in a globalized world, where so many of us work with colleagues whom we never meet. The future success of our companies depend on the ability of people to work together effectively in virtual teams.

To learn more visit [www.lars-sudmann.com](http://www.lars-sudmann.com)

### Coaching

Uta Bunde has a rare talent for finding just the right words, even in a foreign language, to help others and she has a vision, a vision to help people achieve their potential and follow their dreams. She has experienced this journey herself having made the transition from international consultant and project manager to her dream job as successful trainer and coach.

Her workshop was the last one before the conference closing ceremony, so many of her attendees entered the room tired and in no state to listen to even the best speaker any more. However, in her workshop Uta introduced us to the art of improvisation and used exercises from improvisational theatre to get us to leave our comfort zones so effectively that within a few minutes she transformed exhausted strangers into a group re-energized and enjoying every minute.

She proved why her Berlin based firm - specializing in helping people to find their vocation (Berufung), to manage projects effectively and to achieve personal and professional leadership – has become so successful.

For more information, about Uta visit <http://www.elementarcoach.de> or contact [bunde@elementarcoach.de](mailto:bunde@elementarcoach.de)

### Effective and efficient

Due to these wonderful workshops I now see Toastmasters conferences as one of the most cost effective and time efficient investment ways we can develop our skills and our careers. Where else can one attend so many high quality workshops by professional trainers within two days and at no additional cost?

The conference workshops are a practical way to get a "sample" of the trainer's skills, before attending one of their longer courses. I wholeheartedly recommend participating in the above trainers' courses.

The workshops inspired me to take action (finally) and to do two things:

Firstly, to attend high quality workshops, run by the best trainers – within hours of returning from the conference I had booked a place on Munich Toastmaster, Naomi Isaac's <http://naomisusanisaacs.com> "Discover Your True Talent" course (Begabung und Potential).

Secondly, to launch a website with reviews (by myself and other toastmasters) to help us identify those courses, books and workshops, which can help us reach our potential. I will start with a review of Florian's "*The Seven Minute Star*" book.

David Sen ACB, ALB has been a Toastmaster for 3 years and is a member of two Munich clubs: Effective Communicators and Prostmasters. He can be contacted via EasySpeak or [david.s.sen@gmail.com](mailto:david.s.sen@gmail.com)



Lars Sudmann in action (photo: Hans Stockmans)



**The Tweet-Files**

@Bambineke Ineke Vermeulen



7am alarm on day off – mmff – off to Basel #district59 fall conf. must repack. wrong shoes & forgot laptop. need gear 4 social stuff

road-trip: Munich-Basel. daylight is golden, waking up, ready for #district59 #2011fallconf! Mel Kelly will represent #divisionI (us)

Basel early afternoon – welcome from hell – miscommunication misery on carpool – Y R people so confused/confusing?

welcome – part II @jackvincent: great to see you back :) doing anything serious here?

impressed – main man JV is to be DJ – will need influencing – must take care of l8r – first check out room – in for another commotion

room tiny, but ok: clean + great view + won't be using it much anyway – let's ask for deal anyway – got it too :-)

lack of air – must leave hotel – downtown is golden and prettier than I thought – shopping alert! no luck - oh well, saved money ;)

back to #district59 #2011fallconf – dang, missed a lot @jackvincent what's up for diner? let's find a gang for not doing death-by-fondu

@peterzinn: great workshop, storytelling is greatly underrated, as are cybersecurity and #socialmedia

fine troop of rebels going through #basel by night

#district59 by night – bar rouge for free – LOL – @thomasrose and @zelmarose you guys rock très cool

mmmfff – 8.30am on saturday – it's just not fair :( rats, stage call at 9.05am – shower-dress-ready... to rumble ;-)

first show on Saturday at #district59 #2011fallconf: #easyspeak – I tell the tale of change mgmt at #munichprostmasters – we rock too!

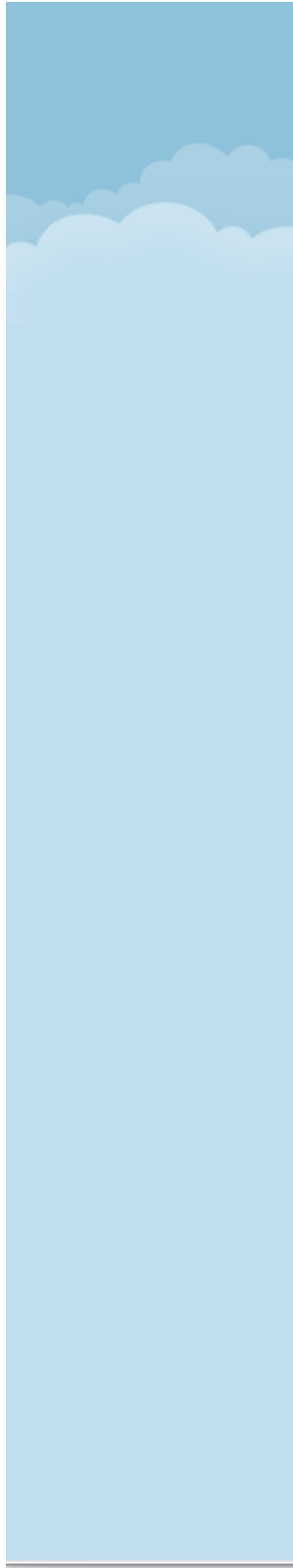
WTF #socialmedia is banned from #district59 #2011fallconf - @jackvincent tell me it ain't so

I guess we can count ourselves lucky that normal #socializing and #networking is still ok – I can't believe this is 2011

#district59 #districtcouncil – all very important stuff, yet so dull too – democracy voting system

I like #robert'srules yet practicing them is kinda not really a riot

ohdeary, almost missed lunch cause I wanna sort out some music for 2nite – forced to lunch on desert – scrumptious #swiss delicacies :)



very loud intermezzo – great for #carnaval lovers – that sure gets us energized

-----  
@TedCorcoran: well said, hear-hear, you do magic with words! now we're all inspired too :) in for a great afternoon

-----  
aaah – the piece the résistance #district59 tabletopics contest. no tweets on the subject , must hushhush till later

-----  
what a topic: I never saw an audience giggle each single time the topic is handed to the contestants :-)

-----  
a fine contest indeed – women as egg-bashers and the stage a fine mess :-)

-----  
and now for the #humorousspeech on the #district59 #2011fallconf with the master of MCs - @johnzimmer: great warm-up session

-----  
oooh if there were a trick for finding the perfect man, KatarinaK would surely not need it :-))

-----  
Jorge from Lisbon has a nerve: drops his towel on stage and gives tips for encounters in the showerroom

-----  
mobile phone alert, how unfortunate :-( sure the villain feels very humble indeed – I know there's a true TM lesson in there

-----  
@johnzimmer: well said, but it's done, magic was broken :( and oh well, the show must go on

-----  
getting ready and dressed up for the gala diner + awards show + dancencedance

-----  
some surprises amongst the prizes, but all in all the best have won – again!

-----  
Tango-tango and then, finally, we can start moving and shaking – great music – great crowd – great energy :-)

-----  
the magic must be broken again and then to #barrouge – music at the #district59 #2011fallconf dance was better ;)

-----  
Sunday 8:30am – mmmfff – oooh getting up is not fun :(

-----  
great educational from #thomasrose on #micromotivation – good advice, wise words and nice action too :)

-----  
wild goes on in the #carstenkies WS on #debatinginaction – there was action and energy and it was LOUD – cool stuff

-----  
and that's the end, #district59's #2011fallconf is over, goodbye to all, 'twas a fine time again, see you in #Poznan in the spring

## Celebrating our new Distinguished Toastmasters



Left to right: Dirk Löffelbein, Marc Tournon, Philippe Christin, Barbara Hoerger. Photo: Hadrian Lutogiewsky

### DTM

*Morag Mathieson, Lt. Governor Education & Training*

Three small letters – DTM – that mean so much! The Distinguished Toastmaster Award is the highest award that Toastmasters International gives to a member. It recognises achievement in both communication and leadership skills.

At the District 59 Fall Conference 2011, District Governor Barbara Hoerger DTM presented 3 new Distinguished Toastmasters:

#### **Marc Tournon DTM**

Division A Governor Marc Tournon, a member of both Lutèce75 and L'Étincelle clubs in Paris, has been a Toastmaster for eight years. During that time he has been proud to see the quality of club meetings rise and also to see how members in his clubs have achieved much in the Leadership Track of the education programme.

Over this time he has noticed that people are recognizing his abilities. In his working life as union delegate and leader of employee events, Marc has been able to put to good use the skills he has learned at Toastmasters. His biggest challenge is to keep his dreams sweet in tough situations, even in situations that seem as challenging as climbing Mount Kilimanjaro!

#### **Philippe Christin DTM**

Philippe Christin has been a Toastmaster for 39 years and is a member of several clubs in division A: Calliope, Forum des rives de Seine, Agora 75, Lutèce75, Expressions and Toastmasters Cote d'Azur. This year he is serving as area A4 Governor.

Creating new clubs is something he has enjoyed, in particular developing a number of clubs in one area where Toastmasters was previously unknown. As he has worked through the Toastmasters programme Philippe has also noticed changes in himself: He has overcome his shyness and gained confidence and assurance. He has been able to use the skills he learned at Toastmasters in every moment of his life.

### **Dirk Löffelbein DTM**

Past Division Governor Dirk Löffelbein is a member of both Düsseldorf Toastmasters and Rheinredner Club in Germany and has been a Toastmaster since 2003. He was also conference chair of the District 59 Spring Conference 2009 in Düsseldorf, something that for him was his biggest challenge but brought him a great sense of satisfaction.

While giving his fifth CC speech project Dirk realized that he actually enjoyed speaking in public and was even more motivated to keep going. In his working life he has been able to use the feedback skills learned at Toastmasters. This has been valued by his colleagues and his input is often sought for presentations that others will give.

His advice to other Toastmasters is simple: "Get feedback, get a mentor and get involved!"

### **How do you become a DTM?**

To achieve the award there are a number of steps a Toastmaster has to take:

1. Give Speeches 42 to be exact!

10 for Competent Communicator

10 for Advanced Communicator Bronze (ACB)

10 for Advanced Communicator Silver (ACS)

10 for Advanced Communicator Gold (ACG)

and 2 as part of the High Performance Leadership Project (HPL).

2. Teach others:

For Advanced Leader Bronze (ALB) - 2 educationals from Successful Club Series/ Leadership Excellence Series

For Advanced Leader Silver (ALS) - 2 educationals from Successful Club Series / Better Speaker Series

For Advanced Leader Gold (ACG) - 1 from Success /Communication, Success / Leadership or Youth Leadership Programme

3. Nurture others

For ACG – you need to mentor a member for their first three speeches.

For ALS – you need to sponsor or mentor a new club or coach a weak club.

4. Work with others

As part of the ALS award you need to complete a High Performance Leadership Project and work with a team to guide and direct you through the project and give you feedback.

5. Serve others

Service is at the heart of all leadership projects in Toastmasters. For the Competent Leader (CL) award you serve your club members by taking on meeting roles, while for ALB you need to serve at least 6 months as a club officer and then for ALS you serve the district for 1 year as a district officer.

There is a lot to do. Are you finding it hard to imagine yourself achieving this award? Anthony Robbins has some good advice: "Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible."

Congratulations to our newest Distinguished Toastmasters!

# Results

## of the District 59 Fall Contests 2011

### English

#### Table Topics Contest

1. Tamara Joyette, Cologne Toastmasters
2. Jo Ann Broger, Blackforest Toastmasters
3. Vera Orac, Prague Speakers Club

#### Humorous Speech Contest

1. Katarina Kultanova Kovalcikova, Vox Fortis Club (Austria)
2. Manjana Saleh, Mercury Toastmasters (Berlin)
3. Jorge Crespo, Young Entrepreneurs Toastmasters (Lisbon)

### French

#### Table Topics Contest

1. Elena Sollewijn Gelpke, Berlaymont Toastmasters
2. Johannes Schneider, Bern Toastmasters Club
3. Charlotte Mellot, Eiffelturm Club

#### Humorous Speech Contest

1. Lucienne Romani, CRFM Club
2. Sebastian Carriere, Verbissimo
3. Charlotte Mellot, Eiffelturm Club

### German

#### Table Topics Contest

1. Christian Eggenberger, Rhetorik Klub Zürich
2. Ulrich Pröve, Adlershof Toastmasters Club
3. Alptekin Koc, Rheinredner Club

#### Humorous Speech Contest

1. Annette Eichler, Rheinredner Club
2. Sergej Tissen, Berliner Redekünstler
3. Carlo von Reumont, Munich Media Speaker

### Wanted

#### Easy-speak Translation Tool Designer

We are looking for volunteers to help the translation team.

- Knowledge of PHP, programming language
- Knowledge of MYSQL database language
- Time and imagination to look at the existing set-up and rework it.
- This position collaborates directly with Malcolm Warden

Contact Erwin Pfuhrer for details [erwinp@boxbe.com](mailto:erwinp@boxbe.com)

### Next Clarion

The next issue of the Clarion will appear at the end of March. We welcome your texts, photos or drawings. Please observe the last date for contributions:

**March 5**

Send to [annica.nordin@volvo.com](mailto:annica.nordin@volvo.com)

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