



# Toastmasters of Paris

## October 29, 2024 Halloween Meeting -

Theme - Magic

### THE WELCOME

Vicki, President and Toastmaster of the Evening, welcomed members and guests to the Halloween meeting. She explained the derivation of the festival, coming from the Celts, who used ritual to welcome the harvest (hence the abiding significance of pumpkins!) and to usher in the dark period of winter. It was believed that on the night of October 31, the barrier between the living and the spirit world was blurred, and the living and the dead could communicate.



### THE TOAST

Siobhan's toast was that our evening would be "magical and more!"



### THE WORD

Lars intrigued us by announcing that his word had five letters – four vowels and only one consonant – before announcing it: **EERIE**.

Equally eerie – hearing this from Trump!

Results at the end of the night – (but was it rigged, we ask?) – congratulations to Alison, Vicki, Ava, Suzanne, and Jessica, who used the word.



## THE JOKE

Alison's joke took us to Scaryville where a young vampire was asked to put out two pop-up ghosts to scare people. But he became confused about which ghost was which. So his parents helped him. Put A in one room and B in the other: but the next day the ghosts had escaped, and the lad was again confused. Tie a ribbon onto one and not the other: but the ribbon fell off, and the lad was again confused. Measuring them was suggested as the last hope, and the little vampire did as he was told.

"Well," asked his mother the next day, "did that work?"

"Oh yes," came the response. "I won't get muddled again. The green ghost is longer than the white ghost!"

## YOU ARE INVITED Nov 16 & Nov 29

**Philippe Minh, Area Director, invites us to join fellow Toastmasters to celebrate the milestones of the hundredth anniversary of Toastmasters International.**



To commemorate, join a party –  
Saturday, November 16, 14h – 18h,  
Maison de la Vie Associative et  
Citoyenne,  
11 rue Caillaux 75013.

And come to an open house designed to challenge old and new members alike.  
Friday, November 29, 7:00 - 10:00 PM,  
Hôtel CIS Kellermann,  
17 Bd Kellermann, 75013 Paris · Paris

***Please sign up – see the details Vicki forwarded to email and the Toastmasters WhatsApp.***

## MEETING DATES



Our next sessions –  
November 5  
November 19





## TABLE TOPICS

**Benoit, Table Topics Master, explained that table topics train us  
“To speak confidently even without preparation.”**


**If Maya had a spell for one skill,** it would be to utilize all her human capacity throughout her life so that she could use her brain, emotional intelligence, capacity to learn all languages, and make human connections.

**If Connal had an enchanted mirror in which he could see the future,** he would look to see what was going to happen to his two sons. He recognized that many of their life-changing events will probably happen after he is gone. “I won’t be there forever,” he explained, “but I would like to see.”

**If Peter could snap his fingers and teleport anywhere,** he would go straight to “a nice warm beach!” After lying in the sun for a while, he would look for the nearest Toastmasters. No worry if he couldn’t find a club: he would start one! He urged us all to do the same: “Go out and multiply!”

**The rule that Oana would use to change the world** would be to “Change humanity around a value, love.” Love, she claims, is “The answer to everything!” We should love everybody and love life, living it to the full. Oana concluded by suggesting that we should all make some loving gesture tonight.

If Tricia could charm any object to come to life, she would charm the species that have disappeared and bring them back to the world. She lamented the animals, insects, birds, and fish that have become extinct.



# Speeches and Evaluations

## KIDS



Yannis focused on the people he knows who are deciding to start a family - and he wondered if they are really ready. He noted that at work, discussion about babies is followed by discussion about divorce! Yannis focused on a variety of problems that children bring, ending with the suggestion that we should be given training before starting a family.

Silvia, evaluating, said it was an interesting speech and that Yannis had met his general objectives of vocal variety (for example, using pauses for emphasis) and good body language (many hand gestures and turning to face all sections of the room). She noted that Yannis had also accomplished his personal goal of reducing stumbles.

Yannis speaks softly, Silvia continued, and he should work to vary volume more. She also advised that he slow down, especially after questions, to allow the audience to respond.



## INSPIRATION UNLEASHED



Caroline took us from the blank page of a project to the magic moment of creativity when inspiration is unleashed. She suggested that creation is the magic in all of us, not restricted to artists but “constantly in play.” When inspiration strikes – like lightning – “we are compelled to create.”

Ava, evaluating, commended Caroline’s “important message.” The content of the speech was, she said, “pure emotion,” as Caroline made us understand creativity as “the magic of life.”

However, she warned that Caroline’s use of her phone was a distraction for the audience and recognized that this is a challenge for all speakers – how to prepare and then “Let yourself go” in order to “Let the magic happen!”

## FOUR STEPS....



“Four Steps Morning Routine for More Energy and Peace” introduced us to Jessica’s podcast on practicing good mental health.

Debbie opened by recognizing Jessica as an accomplished speaker with a clear and well-structured speech. She had engaged the audience from the beginning with her smile, her reassurance, and her personal story which added “the right level of humanity.” Debbie observed that the podcast showed a change from ‘cheerleader’ to something more measured in tone, but argued that it was excellent, with clearly defined steps that are easy to remember.

With only one suggestion for improvement, that Jessica should slow down a little (we wanted to try the breathing she was recommending), Debbie concluded with a personal request to sign up for the podcast!



## DON'T BE A TOOL

Alex's speech, summarized in his catchy final words: "Your phone is a tool. Use it. Don't let it use you!" was about his giving up social media phone apps and the affect it had on him. He ended by encouraging us all to do similarly.

Suzanne reported that Alex had hooked the audience "from start to finish." "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," she remarked, adding, "and the audience ate it up," judging by their laughter. She described the structure of the speech: a strong beginning (a direct address to the audience repeating what we have all been told – "You're looking at your phone too much!"), an assessment of the challenges, and then a series of questions.

Alex established "presence" and used good vocal variety. He tried to make use of the room – walking out and sitting down at one point - but as he then returned to the lectern, Suzanne was unsure of the purpose of this. She noted that we are restricted by the room itself, which makes movement awkward: unless speakers stay at the lectern, they have their back to at least some of the audience.

Suzanne praised the speech in terms of both writing and presentation. Alex is a senior member if the club and an advanced speaker, she said, concluding by thanking him for setting a great example.



## FLORENCE'S FAVORITES

Florence's grammarian report included a selection of her favorite words and phrases from the evening –



# Our Guests...

**YANNICK**, originally from Germany, was in a writing center a year ago when another course member talked about Toastmasters. A Toastmasters club had been this person's way of getting through cancer. Yannick confessed he feels a little shy in social settings, "So why not work on it?" [And he's come to the right place: most members confess they began Toastmasters because they found themselves 'feeling a little shy' about speaking!] At the end of the meeting, Yannick said he had learned simply by watching. He "couldn't have thought of a better way to spend the evening," he told us.

**CLAIRE** moved to Paris in June, and although she's known about Toastmasters "for ages", this was the first time she had attended a meeting. She hopes to improve her social speaking and meet new people. Afterwards, she told us that she had "Really enjoyed it," and thought the club was "a safe place." She liked the way evaluators provided positive praise but also gave constructive suggestions regarding improvement.

**JOHN** introduced himself as a Companion to Claire. He explained that he would like to make progress talking in public. Afterwards, he described the meeting as "very varied."

"Good to see you back again," Vicki told **MARIELA**, back for a second visit. Mariella was entering fully into the spirit of the evening by dressing as Wednesday Adams. She told us she wants to improve her communication and oral skills. She enjoys the way the meetings are structured for this and subsequently claimed that, "Like the first time," she had "learned a lot."

**LISA**, originally from Canada, is another person who heard about Toastmasters many years ago but who had taken a while to get round to attending a meeting. She gave the evening a "Two thumbs up!"

We were delighted to see **CONNAL** back again. Former Treasurer of the club, he claims to have "fond memories of everyone I know here," but that he wasn't so sure about the rest of the group. He admitted later that he had enjoyed the meeting, which he had attended, he said, because he had been "chased and harassed" into visiting. Benoit and Siobhan were given credit for persuading him to come!

**PHILIPPE-MINH** introduced himself to those who didn't know him: fellow Toastmaster and member of two clubs, he is now area director with responsibility for liaising between the groups. He thanked Vicki and Alex in particular, telling us that he sees them both fairly often. At the end of the meeting, Philippe told us he had been impressed by the variety and the thoughtfulness of the speeches this evening, and he invited us to the centenary celebrations - don't forget to book!



*"On this night of shadows and whispers,  
let the veil between worlds grow thin,  
and may magic awaken in every heart!"*

*Vicki (and Chat GPT)*

## GENERAL EVALUATION - MARIA



**Maria congratulated -**

**Martin** for his “fantastic costume!”

**Vicki** for her introduction to the evening’s theme (it was the first time Maria had heard about the origins of Halloween) and on her explanation of the IT setup for the members on Zoom.

**Benoit** for his interesting table topic subjects.

**Connal** for his enjoyable table topic.

**Tricia** for her clever way round the subject that had stumped her!

**Claudia** for her clear presentation of the timing rules.

**Silvia** for her examination of Yannis’ objectives.

**Maria made a few suggestions regarding how the evening might be improved –**

Perhaps the word of the evening could be something familiar to non-native speakers?

Should the votes-and-notes papers include space for feedback to evaluators?

A spare chair at the front would be helpful for the TME and the General Evaluator.

Better wifi is needed – we lost our Zoom connection.

**Maria finished with a song, “Thriller”!**



Vicki closed the meeting. She thanked Alison for “saving the day” by bringing costume accessories and announcing the evening’s winners – scroll down for details.



VTMP members – a rabbit, a parcel, several witches, a man with a cut throat, Trump, a skeleton, a hit man, and Wednesday Adams!

**Winning Magic!**



Evaluation –  
Debbie & Suzanne



Table Topics – Oana



Best Speaker – Alex

**ANY QUESTIONS?  
The People with  
the Answers! -**

Vicki – President  
Alison – Secretary  
Treasurer – Benoit  
Lars – VP Education  
Tristan – VP Membership  
Yannis – Sergeant-at-Arms  
Yasmine – VP PR  
Peter - Historian  
Alex – Past President

Thanks to everyone who  
provided these fabulous photos.