



Toastmasters of Paris

December 3, 2024



THE PRESIDENT'S WELCOME - Vicki

Opening the meeting, Vicki invited us to think ahead to the next meeting, December 17th, our Christmas party. Christmas costumes are suggested, red and white cited as “the minimum”! There will be a Secret Santa so we will not go home empty-handed – please bring a small gift (costing no more than 5 euros).

Vicki also announced the Division Christmas party, also at Les Noces de Jeannette, on the 16th (scroll down for invitation details).

CLUB CONTEST NEWS (Feb 4) - Suzanne

Please sign up for one of these roles -

International Speech - open to Pathways Level 2 or more - speak to Lars to expedite this if necessary.

Table Topics - open to all members.

Contest chair, chief judge, and judges - experienced TMPers are needed for these roles.

Vote counters, timers, and sergeants at arms – open to all members

For more information, see Suzanne's email.

TOASTMASTER OF THE EVENING - Lars

Lars told us how pleased he was to see the restaurant so full before moving on to explain his choice of theme for the evening, *Reflections on our Past, Visions for our Future*. We need to think back, he said, as those who forget history are doomed to relive it, and drew our attention to the Māori proverb, “I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on the past.”

THE TOAST - Caroline

The past looks back with a story to tell but is also the foundation for the future. Rather than becoming nostalgic, we should use what has gone before in order to focus on the future, planning actions to turn dreams into goals that become our reality. Carline concluded by toasting “The wisdom of the path, the promise of the future, and the path that connects them.”

THE WORD – THIBAUT

We look back to the past and we look forward to the future, but the most important is the present – hence Thibaut chose the word “Instant”.

THE JOKE – Alex

The past, present, and future walk into a bar. It was tense.

SPEECHES

JUST DO IT!

TRISTAN announced that *Just Do It* is his key message and philosophy, as it is the way to overcome the common fear of big decisions. If necessary, he said, we must do it, fall, stand up, and try again...

ANAELLE commended Tristan for the “very clear” structure of his speech including a good conclusion (something she believes is often overlooked), his “great “introduction, and his ability to engage the audience. She also praised his use of hand gestures and his use of the space.

Anaelle pointed to opportunities for growth, including greater vocal variety (the topic did not lend itself particularly to this, she thought) and not letting his notes take from the fluidity of the speech (he was at his best when he did not use them). She advised him not to apologize for stumbles – he is doing a good job!



ICE BREAKER - WHERE IS HOME?



DAVIDE said that he would introduce himself but wanted us to think about ourselves. He described what it was that made him want to join Toastmasters – all the things that had drawn us, too, such as internationalism, love of a challenge, and a common language.

VINCENT concluded that Davide fulfilled his purpose of introduction and had excelled in several areas, including speech construction, use of humor, vocal variety and eye contact. He wondered if Davide could have included something about what, in fact, he considers his home, and he noted that, at the beginning of the speech, Davide was hampered by holding on to the lectern.

Vincent ended by looking forward to hearing Davide speak again, perhaps in the contest!

RUBY RONDELETTE IN PARIS AND NEW YORK

ALISON, who volunteered at the last minute when someone had to step down, told us about her experiences performing burlesque. Although no one dreams about “taking your clothes off for money,” she told us that, mentored by a more experienced dancer, she discovered a love of this “art form mocking societal norms.”

“What a delightful speech!” SILVIA began. Alison had aroused our curiosity, entertained us with great storytelling, and done so with humor. Silvia praised the use of a prop, a mask. She liked the conclusion, in which Alison spoke of the dollar she keeps to remind her she had reached her dreams. To improve the speech further, Silvia argued that Alison could have talked more about her mentor, as this was the object of the speech.

NEWS

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS!



Vicki announced the decision of the Area Director's report: our club has been declared as “exceeding expectations”!



The Division A party is open to all members.

GUEST EVALUATIONS



MAYUMI was first at TMP in 2008! Since then she has come six times and would like to be a member. She said that the visit was “great as usual,” although she suggested the speeches might be better if they could be given when we are not eating, as was the case on her first visit. As a professional musician, she says performances are very different when an audience gives their complete attention.



DEAN, from Paris and Philadelphia, said that attending Toastmasters was “an exciting opportunity to meet people,” adding that, ironically, this happened when he was in Paris rather than the States. After the meeting, he reported that although he had taken classes in English, writing, and rhetoric, he agreed with the message of Tristan’s speech that finally ‘just doing it’ was the most important thing. He had been impressed by the meeting, as he said everyone in the room had been given an opportunity to speak.



LORA, on her second visit, had been told by her parents about the importance of leadership, and Toastmasters provides this opportunity. Because she is moving to the Netherlands, she will not be joining us but hopes to find a TM group there. (So sorry you won’t be joining our club!)



REI KO was originally from Japan but now lives in Paris. Working in UNESCO, she has a company club available to her, but she would prefer something external in order to meet new people. Reiko is soon to be married, and the idea of speaking to the guests scares her – hence her attendance. She said the club is friendly and feels like a safe space, so she hopes to come back and “maybe!” join.



ALEXANDER, with us for the second time, is interested in Toastmasters because he has stage fright during work presentations. He told us that he is considering becoming a member.



KARINE, living in Paris, has spent time abroad, and is a member of a Toastmasters club in Singapore. She intends to come back again.



HYUNJOO was joining us for the third time, although, after the events in Korea, she admitted she was “not in a good mood to come.” She hoped the meeting would be “a good escape.”



LUIS from Portugal joined us for the first time, hoping to improve communication skills. After the meeting he said he hadn’t known what to expect but had been surprised by the positive atmosphere, the way everybody talks a bit, and how the club teaches through constructive feedback.



YONGDAI joined us for a repeat visit. He has to present in English for work and wants to practice. Afterwards, he told us that he had found the evening “very comfortable.”



NATHALIE described the members as very kind, said the ambience was “amazing”, and was impressed by the feedback given by the evaluation team.

BOB'S GENERAL EVALUATION

Bob said his observations came after a long absence and so were “semi objective”.

These are his notes -

General:

- name tag box is great. Bravo Vicki.
- pre-formatted feedback and voting slips are great. Could be even better if voting space were much reduced and more space allocated to feedback slips
- perhaps re-think agenda timing. Put the 10 min (or 12 min) break between TT and Speeches to give a bit more time to (finish) eating dinner before speeches. Keep the bathroom break before Eval to 3 minutes.
- (I believe) Timer should only explain the green/yellow/red times for TT because guests need to know. The ONLY people who need to know the timing of the cards are the Time Keeper and the Speaker. And they should already know. Note: If we need to explain time cards for speeches and evaluations, why don't we also do it for the Toast, Joke, Word, etc.? Because it would lengthen the agenda unnecessarily. And the repetition becomes boring.
- It's important for members to know the rules, but also ok to break them in small ways occasionally to experiment with new ideas.
- Hyunjoo's candidacy speech was excellent with her focus on personal motivation.

Pre-Education Session:

- * Lars great job as first time TME. Stepped in to solicit guest comments that had been skipped
- Caroline nice toast especially with a phrase about “the journey is what connects the past and the future”
- Thibaut made a similar point using “Instant” to represent the gap between past and future.
- Alex started telling the joke, without prefacing “Here's my joke” which is too common

Table Topics:

- * Benoit opened with humor and wonderful theme-based topics helped elicit very good answers by all.
- * Always call on an experienced TM before any guests so they can see how it works
- Several TT speakers began by repeating the question, usually a good and easy technique
- * Amelie gave an excellent TT, but Siobhan's could have been used in a master class. (Like Alex she disagreed with the question which people forget is always an option.) Ancestors 200 years ago lived the SAME way. People don't change. And then tied it the 100 yr anniversary of TM in her conclusion. Masterful!

Evaluation Tips:

- An evaluation should be for the benefit of the whole audience, not just the speaker.
- Instead of saying “what could be improved,” it's nicer to say “here are opportunities for the future”
- Instead of saying “What I would have done is...,” it's nicer to say “What you could have done is...”
- * It's ok to use notes, but don't hold them in your hand while gesturing as Anaëlle pointed out
- Don't start with “Good evening fellow TM and welcome guests. It's a pleasure to be here...” (as Silvia pointed out and what Craig Valentine calls the “unpleasant pleasantries”). Same for ending with “Thank you.”

Evaluation Team

- Don't reward the winner who uses Word of the Day the most. Making quantity a goal results in too many inappropriate uses.
- A diplomatic way to deliver stumble report without unnecessarily embarrassing any speaker is to recognize those with fewest stumbles, detail specifics of those with moderate numbers and invite those with excessive stumbles to consult your tally sheet after the meeting.

THE EVENING'S RIBBONS



ICE BREAKER - DAVIDE



TABLE TOPICS - SIOBHAN



SPEECH - ALISON



EVALUATION - ANAELLE

Closing the meeting, Vicki congratulated Lars, Toastmaster of the Evening for the first time, and reminded everyone about the next meeting December 17



CHRISTMAS PARTY

