

Toastmasters of Paris

February 18, 2025

THEME – HALF-TIME CHALLENGE

Suzanne, Toastmaster of the evening, explained that we are halfway through our year, with five months behind us and another five ahead of us. It's a perfect time to take stock of where we are and to adjust our objectives. We need to acknowledge our accomplishments and reset our goals.

What's next? – And who can help us get there?

MENTORS *Scroll down for more details*

Alison, VP Mentorship, spoke of the importance of mentors in helping us achieve our goals. March is mentorship month, and mentors are encouraged to reach out to their mentees.

JOKE

Alexander M told us that life is like a football game – a matter of dodging people who get in our way and then making goals. At the beginning we have energy, but after half-time, it's not so easy!

WORD

Caroline proposed MOMENTUM as the word of the evening: it was used by Yannis, Nathalie, Siobhan, Maria, and Mohammad.



TOAST



Tricia was attending in person (she lives in Brittany). TMPer for 18 years, she recognized the rewards – and often enduring friendships – that result from the mentor / mentee relationship.

MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATE PRESENTATION – NATHALIE

Nathalie explained that she had wanted to find a French Toastmasters French club. Nevertheless, she decided to try us out. It took only one visit ... !

And now she would like to join TMP. As a teacher, Nathalie “speaks for a living,” but she feels she still has much both to learn and to give. For example, she can see herself in the role of grammarian!

Mentoring

Alison, VP Mentoring

Alison is passionate about mentoring. Having organized mentoring programs for other groups, she's convinced that "Mentoring works!"

She has been "relatively quiet" as she is still learning how mentoring works in Toastmasters. In continuing to develop the program, "I have Martin to thank," she told us, as he shared information and ideas with her. Now, whenever a new member joins the group, Alison will organize that they have a mentor and will send letters to both mentor and mentee so they know what to expect.

Knowing that March is Mentorship month, Alison encouraged mentors and mentees to meet up and to log on to Pathways together.

INTERESTED? - Alison invited members to let her know if they are interested in taking on a mentee. If this is you, contact her: she can give you further details.

Want to dive deeper?

Should you want to learn more, there is now a Pathways Mentor Program. It covers "a wide range of topics from understanding your role as a mentor and assessing your readiness through a comprehensive assignment that includes a six-month mentoring commitment."

TABLE TOPICS

ALEX said he was going to announce a series of little-used words. The object of the exercise was to give the meaning of each word. He didn't expect anyone to recognize these, but speakers should sound as if they knew what they were talking about!

FILIPENDULOUS

CAROLINE explained it's a combination of marvelous and something that flips (from the idea of *filip*). It is the type of word that someone like Philip, her ex, would appropriate for himself!

filipendulous: suspended by or strung upon a thread

CATILLATE

SILVIA opened with a question: Do you catillate? The word comes from three common words, cat – till – late, and it describes someone who mews every evening, continuing till after midnight (or it would be cat-til-early!).

Catillate: to lick dishes

CACOGRAPHY

NATASHA likes “to engage in cacography.” At the weekend she attends a free club in Paris, where a cacographer choreographs people laughing. Not much training is needed – try it!

Cacography: bad handwriting

JENTACULAR

FLORENCE said the first part of the word is Jenta, something she has played in the past. Now she does Wordle every day. She told us that when your first guess is “jentacular”, it's a wonderful feeling!

jentacular: pertaining to breakfast

FLINGEE

OANA learned the word from her grandmother, who had it from hers, and so on back through the generations. The Flintstones first used it to name rituals, but it now means ‘something like a Flintstone’.

flingee: one at whom anything is flung



YANNIS - MY FIRST TABLE TOPIC EVALUATED BY MOHAMMAD

Yannis recalled his first table topic, what he would eat were he to hibernate like a bear (mushrooms), about discovering that a woman had lived in a cave for 500 days, and about bringing dried mushrooms home from holiday.

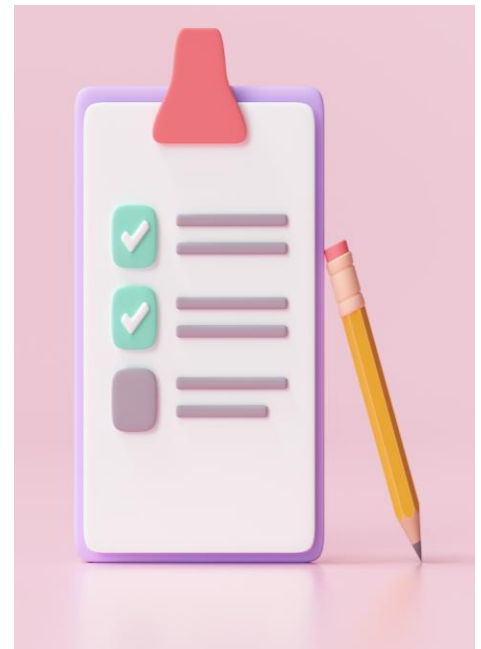
Circling around, he said the table topic had made him realize he needed to be more in touch with nature, and he has now joined a rooftop gardening club, a happy result of a table topic he had hated!

Mohammad noted a moment of hesitation and suggested Yannis could use greater vocal variety (for example stressing the exaggerated number of bags of mushrooms he'd brought back from his trip). He praised "the butterfly effect of the structure" Yannis had used, moving through ideas before closing on his starting point; it was "a great way to engage." He applauded Yannis' subtle jokes, which had created laughter, as well as his calm delivery, eye contact, and use of pauses.

MARIA - ORGANIZING A CAMPAIGN EVALUATED BY VICKI

Maria described the campaign that she has been working on, helping with lawyers' elections to the bar. It required a large team of supporters, a program, and a budget.

Vicki congratulated Maria on her excellent PowerPoint. She praised the well organized and structured speech which "opened the door on how lawyers are elected," noting that Maria had taken us through "all the different steps of the campaign" as well as including some very funny moments. She noted that Maria had not needed her notes, which she could perhaps now abandon (thus avoiding shuffling papers). She suggested that adding a more personal story and using more vocal variety would give the speech more drama.



SIOBHAN - WINNING WAYS (ZOOM) EVALUATED BY TRICIA

Siobhan opened with a question: How do you craft a winning speech? She explored the contest speeches from the last session, explored five common elements - personal stories, focusing on bad experiences, with excellent opening sentences, drama, and a takeaway point – and suggested that these potential winners could serve as models for members' speeches.



Tricia noted that the personal objective of managing an online speech was successful. She praised Siobhan's vocal variety and clarity and her mobile face, but suggested she consider experiment with camera position (make sure there are no distractions such as pictures and perhaps give room for gestures). She applauded the structure of the speech (an intriguing opening, exploring a TMI contest winner's ideas, the body, and the final summary), but suggested adding a personal conclusion about what makes a winner.

SILVIA - RIPPLES EVALUATED BY MARTIN

Silvia 's contest speech was constructed around a well told narrative. This was followed by a section of reflection on the experience, including one of Mother Teresa's sayings which Silvia finds particularly inspiring.

Martin said his task was to help Silvia turn a great speech into a contest winner on March 1st. He complimented Silvia for already having all the hallmarks of a great story: a hero, a villain, and a confrontation. However, he noted, one element is still needed, a sense of victory at the end. He told her that the speech was mainly narrative and needed more sense of drama. He advised Silvia to begin small, perhaps unable to establish eye contact with the audience, and then to gain confidence as the story unfolds. This infusion of drama would communicate growth and victory. allowing the protagonist to become the true hero of the story.



EVALUATION

GRAMMARIAN – AVA liked

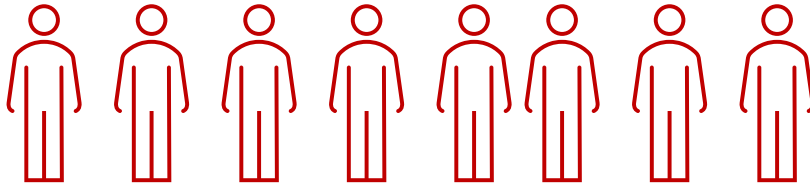
Nathalie's
Go big or go home!

Siobhan's
Drumroll, please!

Silvia's
Emboldened to become more abrasive
– the repeated B sound

STUMBLE CATCHER - ALISON applauded

the eight people managed speeches without a single hesitation! – Congratulations to



THE ZERO CLUB - Mohammad Oana Martin Silvia Vicki Tricia Amelie Nathalie

GENERAL EVALUATION – AMELIE enjoyed

- Seeing Tricia in person rather than on Zoom.
- The large number of guests and the variety of reasons for their visits, proving that in this hundredth year of Toastmasters International, our club is particularly attractive.
- Alison's call to action regarding mentoring, and the timeliness of this as a "half-time challenge" in alignment with the evening's theme.
- Siobhan's reminder of Toastmaster Magazine as a resource.
- Alex's clever idea for table topics. (She asked for the real definitions. Alex responded to the request with a prompt email.)
- The use of Maria's PowerPoint as a visual aid.
- Tricia's evaluation, giving some excellent tips for on-screen presentations.
- Timing – good breaks and dinner service at appropriate times.
- Zoom – excellent tech tonight!

Our Guests...

We were delighted to see so many guests again.
Thanks for coming: please come back again –
Eddy-Michèle,

Lou,

Souad,

Tabatha,

Natasha,

Lawrie.

Louis,

Anne,

Solono,

Shreyansh,

Andrea,

Oana,

Zahra,

and Le!

Some Feedback

Nathalie had been nervous about her speech but was grateful for the opportunity.

Anne was here for the third time. She congratulated Nathalie!

Louis suggested that Toastmastering helps prepare people for the world.

Andrea thanked the club for an entertaining meeting.

Le, who enjoys speaking, praised the quality of the speeches.

Natasha had done some Toastmastering sessions and is now interested in building her confidence.

Zahra told us that she doesn't yet have all the storytelling tools she wants – hence she has sought out Toastmasters!

Lawrie, who was first here on the contest night, told us he enjoys meeting new people.





WINNERS
MARTIN –
EVALUATION

SILVIA – DOUBLE
WINNER: BOTH
TABLE TOPICS AND
SPEECH

PRESIDENT'S FINAL COMMENTS

Vicki has sent out mid-year surveys. She hopes that all members respond and have their say - so the excomm can make the club "even better"!

She announced the date of the next meeting.

It will be our carnival meeting, so everyone is encouraged to come in costume!



NEXT MEETING

**Tuesday, March 4
Carnival!**

**COME IN
COSTUME**