

ENGLISH CENTER BASEL WHAT'S HAPPENING?

MAY 2011

News and Views from the *Students and Staff*

FREE ~ ISSUE 9

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Who's that?

JEREMY BLANCHARD English Teacher

Jeremy was born in the USA and lived there until he was 5 years old. He spent the next 7 years in Spain and then moved to Australia, where he lived until he was 25. He is now living in Basel and married to a Swiss. As a result, Jeremy not only speaks English, Spanish and German, but his outlook on life is really international. He has worked as an English Teacher at the school since 2006; but when his daughter was born, Jeremy reduced his hours so that he and his wife, Martina, could share the joy and challenges of parenting fairly equally. With the birth of their second child, a son, Jeremy says that they both feel more relaxed and less anxious about the whole process, although it was just as amazing to hold their precious newborn as it had been the first time.

Jeremy is very switched on when it comes to new media, software, computers and electronic gadgets. For example, he was one of the first to have an iPhone, and his two-year-old daughter, Yuna, knew how to play games on it when she was 12 months old! What is more important to Jeremy than such gadgets, however, is the technology which enables him to create music. As a composer of music, he's been working with electronic media for several years, but he's just recently released his music for sale. Go to <http://j3rm.net> to listen to it and to download it if you like what you hear.

Over the last couple of months, Jeremy has been one of the teachers working especially hard on producing the Group Lesson material for the new computer-based system at the school. During this period, his son, Amiel, was born. Although he has had quite a lot on his plate all at the same time, Jeremy has risen to the challenge admirably!

(See over to learn more about Jeremy.)

MOVE vs MOVEMENT

by June Winterflood – Canada

My husband and I are moving house, so I went to the post office to give notice of our change of address. As usual, the man at the postal counter was very helpful and efficient. He also spoke very good English, but at the end of our exchange he wished me a "happy movement". That's when I realised that even simple words can confuse learners. (The teacher in me couldn't resist and I pointed out that the word should be "move" not "movement". He said thanks, and I left.)

Take a look in your dictionary. Can you find an entry for "move" as a noun to mean "a change of location or residence"? That's the definition I found at www.dictionary.com. It turns out that "move" is far from a simple word. For example, if you go to www.learnersdictionary.com, you will see a lot of entries. The secret, however, is not to despair at the number of meanings and uses but to concentrate on understanding the word in the context you found it in. – Only if you're not sure, use a dictionary to confirm your understanding.

What happened?

THE SPEAKING APÉRO

by June Winterflood – Canada

About 20 students came to the Speaking Apéro on 28 April, and everyone said they really enjoyed themselves!

Besides having some snacks and drinks, everyone spoke to as many people as possible: every ten minutes or so, they changed speaking partners and talked about a new theme.

The highlight of the event was when André, Fabiola Sandoval's husband, played the guitar and sang a few English songs, which gave us the perfect opportunity to talk about music and its importance in our lives.

At the end of the Apéro, the participants gave some excellent suggestions for making the Apéro even better.

I hope you'll sign up for the next one!

Spending some rare free time

LOOKING FORWARD TO A WONDERFUL MAY

by Michael von Buren – Switzerland

I quit my job at the place where I've been working as an optician for nearly 14 years. As a result, I'll have a free month before I begin my new job in June.

A free month! I have never had so many days just to enjoy free time. Well, I've been to Canada two times for six weeks and eight weeks, respectively, but I had 'a lot to do' in those holidays. And now I just have free time. It feels so good to look forward to this coming time. When I was a child, I always realised the good times when they had already passed. And now, as an adult, I can rejoice about wonderful happenings and times which are still to come. What a great change!

I made a list of things that I want to do this May. There are different things on the list. I guess it'll be a fun month:

- Going curling, because I always thought that curling could be an interesting sport for me.
- Trying to play the euphonium, because I've only played the tuba until now and I wonder if I can make a change.
- Helping a farmer, because I like nature and I know a farmer quite well who would be happy to get a little help.
- Learning English, that's why I booked a flight to London where I'll enjoy nine days in a B&B.

And, of course, there will be more things to go on this list. I guess, everybody has got such a list in his brain or on a sheet of paper. And I do have the chance to work on this list – let's see how much shorter it'll be after May. ©



THE SHOE GOES ON

by Laura Almeida – Portugal & Switzerland

We walk in them for several hours every day and, with them, circle the globe four times in a lifetime, which sounds astonishing. They also give us a personality and make us care about our next performance. Shoes are a mirror of our soul as well, since they give us solace or pleasure, but sometimes also pain.

Shoes: they keep us going – literally speaking. Also, they have left so many traces in the history of mankind and say so much about belonging to a certain kind of social group. Doc Martens, originally developed as a comfortable and solid working shoe, for example, became standard footwear for English Skinheads and, later on, a symbol of the punk scene.

It is known that shoes with high heels demonstrated the status of its owner during some eras in the past. In China, for instance, aristocratic women used to wear shoes with plateau soles. The height of the sole combined with a tripping walk signalised the social position of the particular woman.

What might be less well-known is that Vincent van Gogh created a painting with shoes being the main theme in it. This object, the shoe, has gained a remarkable number of admirers due to the strong symbolic relation that it has to power, social status, eroticism and religion.

"Show me your shoes and I'll tell you who you are."

This quotation has proved right, today and in the past. Be it the design, the shape, the material or the colour, shoes provide us with a lot of information about the person wearing them. Shoes have an influence on mood as well as on self-confidence, and depending on which type of footwear we have on, we appear in quite a different way every time.

What shoes also reveal is the passion with which they have been created. A really famous shoe designer is undoubtedly the Parisian, Christian Louboutin, who fell in love with the High Heel when he was a ten-year-old boy. He initiated his career thanks to a ban he saw in a Parisian museum that didn't allow women with High Heels to get in, in order not to scratch the ground. So, this was the trigger that gave him the thrill to create his own Heels with the legendary red sole, worn by stars like Dita von Teese, Beyoncé, Angelina Jolie and innumerable other women throughout the world.

Book reading

When the Bergli bookshop closed a few months ago, it was feared that opportunities to attend readings of English books would disappear, but it seems that Thalia is offering one such event:

The travel writer, Dicon Bewes, will present his #1 bestseller, "Swiss Watching – Inside Europe's Landlocked Island" on Wednesday, 18 May, at 8 pm, at the Thalia shop in Basel (evening entrance Freie Strasse 36).

It was the surprise hit of the year 2010: a light-hearted yet revealing journey around Switzerland. See www.diconbewes.com

The reading with Apéro is 15 CHF or free with a Thalia Bonuskarte. A reservation is recommended. Call 061 264 26 26

STUDYING FOR THE FCE

(FIRST CERTIFICATE IN ENGLISH DIPLOMA FROM CAMBRIDGE ESOL, A DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN THE UK)

by Mireille Nägelin – Switzerland

If you have faith in something, you believe in something. From my point of view, I think it is always really essential to have a personal goal no matter what phase of life you are in. It helps you to be motivated and enables you to reach your personal goal sooner, which certainly gives you a great feeling of satisfaction. It is not necessary to have a huge goal; it is enough when you have small goals initially. For example, say to yourself, "This week, I'll write two emails in English to a friend and, next week, I'll read as much as I can of an interesting book." Another good way is to be inspired by your favourite music or a famous person.

As for me, I never regret having studied very intensively for my FCE exam. I invested all the time that I could find after finishing my daily work. I was so deep in my learning fever that I dreamed in English once or twice. Whenever I could find a few quiet minutes for myself, I tried to translate words and thoughts in English that were in my brain. In addition to this, I met my brother, Marco, once a week. He gave me useful advice and helped me to think positively and to stay motivated during my FCE course. That gave me a good feeling. We spent hours together, sitting in front of all preparation books and exercises imaginable. It was sometimes like a crossword or competition: both of us tried to find the answer faster than the other. I challenged him and he challenged me.

Marco was, of course, the right person for this, because he had spent nine months in Burlington, North Carolina. He achieved a grade B in CAP. I'll always admire him for that and also because he went to a college there with locals.

Personally, I think everybody can reach all conceivable goals whenever they have faith in what they do.

What's on at English Center Basel in May

WHAT'S HAPPENING? PLANNING MTG
Meet to plan the content for next month's broadsheet.

THURS. 19 MAY ~ FROM 13:00 TO 14:00

SPEAKING PRACTICE APÉRO

All students and former students are cordially invited to an Apéro with light refreshments and lots of conversation.

THURS. 26 MAY ~ FROM 17:30 TO 19:00

Sign up for this event at reception or send an e-mail to june_winterflood@yahoo.com

Please write something!!!

Possible topics for What's Happening?

- I think spring is the best season, because...
- Describe your typical working day
- What are your plans for the summer?
- What places in or near Basel would you take a tourist to see, and why?
- What's your opinion of the new computer-based learning system at the school?

DEADLINE for your writing: 21 May 2011

Please e-mail june_winterflood@yahoo.com

www.englishcenterbasel.ch

The website for English Center Basel is now active, and What's Happening? is on!

ECB on facebook

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