

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

OCTOBER 2011

News and Views from the *Students and Staff*

FREE ~ ISSUE 14

PEOPLE | EVENTS | NEWS | REVIEWS | STORIES | COMMENT | LANGUAGE | OTHER STUFF



Who's that?

**SIMONE**  
VON RICKENBACH  
*Receptionist*

Simone started working at the school at the beginning of 2008. Like many of our receptionists, Simone is also a university student. She's taking general history and German philology, the study of German literature and linguistics. She's writing her master's thesis, which is due in March 2012.

At the age of 19, before going on to university, Simone took a gap year after high school and worked at a hospital. During that period, she also spent four months in the USA, on Long Island in the state of New York, being a nanny for a family with three children.

(See over to learn more about Simone.)

Top tip

**LEARNING ENGLISH WITH IPHONE APPS**  
by *Laura Almeida*

Do you have an iPhone?

If so, then you might be interested in getting to know one of the following apps I regard as pretty useful in the context of improving your English and having fun, too – with the advantage of being able to do this on the move and at any time.



“English Idioms LITE” provides you with all kinds of sayings, divided into many categories, and is free.



Another app worth trying out is “SuperMemo” which contains packages of grammar, vocabulary or exam preparation. It's available both as a demo version and as a full version which you can buy for a small amount.



Last but not least, there's an app I like using for entertainment. It's called “Style.com”, and it reports on the latest news from the world of fashion.

## THE PROS & CONS

by *June Winterflood – Canada*

Making a decision is all about knowing what you value. Whether you're trying to decide which clothes to wear, which film to see, or which English course to take, it comes down to a seemingly simple question: what's important to you?

When comparing a good point (a “pro”) to a bad point (a “con”), use any of these words: advantage or disadvantage, benefit or drawback, upside or downside, positive aspect or negative aspect, and good thing or bad thing.

Weighing up the pros and cons involves, first, stating the “pro” then explaining it, giving reasons and examples and, second, stating the “con” and offering corresponding arguments.

One of the benefits of using this technique is that your audience can follow your ideas more easily. When discussing pros and cons, we often start our explanation of a positive aspect by saying, “On the one hand,” and when we want to introduce a negative aspect, we say, “On the other hand.”

In writing, “however”, “nevertheless”, “conversely”, and, in speech, “having said that”, “mind you”, “but” are alternatives to “on the other hand”.

Using such linking words in your writing or speech will help you get your ideas across to someone else. However, they won't help you make your decision.

## Culture and fashion



South Indian

## THE TRADITIONAL INDIAN SAREE

by *Rathi Raghunathan – India*

In India, the traditional dress is the Saree. There are so many kinds of Sarees there. Special silk sarees are very famous in India. At weddings and special traditional functions, all of the women wear silk sarees. A silk saree is made using gold and silver thread. A saree has a length of 5 yards (a little less than 5 meters). It is very expensive.

Kanchipuram is a town which is famous for making silk sarees. Kanchipuram's main business is making and selling silk sarees. One saree takes one month to make. But it is handmade and of high quality. It is valuable for a long time. Silk sarees usually have two borders and artwork is at the end of the saree, where it hangs down the shoulder and can be seen.

In India, a lot of towns make different styles of silk saree. Each town has its own special silk saree style. There are many types of silk saree like Kanchipuram silk saree, Arni silk saree, Mysore silk saree, Crepe silk saree, and Banarasi silk saree. The latest fashion is to mix Kanchipuram silk with hand embroidery work to give a perfect saree.

There are different ways to wear a saree. In the south, an Indian wears the saree ends on the left shoulder. In the west, an Indian wears the saree ends on the right shoulder. In the East, an Indian wears a different style.



West Indian

East Indian

Usually, an Indian woman has at least 15 silk sarees for special occasions – like weddings, anniversaries and important festivals – and about 40 normal sarees – made from cotton, nylon, polyester – and handmade sarees for day-to-day wear depending on the season.



[http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Bahnhof\\_Basel\\_1845.jpg&filetimestamp=20081017120725](http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Bahnhof_Basel_1845.jpg&filetimestamp=20081017120725)

## THE SWISS RAILWAY – YESTERDAY AND TODAY

by *Elena Wüthrich – Switzerland*

Switzerland is located on a strategic crossroads connecting some of the most important areas of the EU, like France, Germany, and Italy.

The first train track was the extension of the French Strasbourg to Basel Railway (Mulhouse to Basel) in 1844 and later, in 1847, the first totally Swiss railway (about 16 km long) was built between Zürich and Baden. From this time until today, the railway has been the most popular element of public transport. Many people travel for work in cities like Zürich, Bern, Luzern, Basel, and Geneva.

The rapid transit rail tracks (the *S-Bahn*) have been incrementally expanded. The fastest time by train between Basel and Zürich is at about 52 minutes. In 1973, it took 1 hour and 20 minutes, with many stops at other stations. The connections with other international railways were not well coordinated and sometimes we had to wait for more than one hour for the next connection. It was not comfortable for a passenger, when buying a ticket, to schedule a train journey.

Today, we have tight connections and, every 20 minutes, we have a direct train from Zürich to Basel or from Basel to Zurich.

So, the next step would be a Swiss Metro, which would enable you to get from Basel to Zürich in only a quarter of an hour. The new technology could push the railway into new dimensions, and distances could become smaller than ever. Where will mobility end? – or should I say that we are at the beginning?



<http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Mardi.PNG&filetimestamp=20060525064931>

## A letter to the school

### LEARNING AT ENGLISH CENTER BASEL

by *Karolina Schneider – Switzerland*

I have been attending English courses at your school for one month. The aim of my English studies is to improve my grammar and conversation skills in English for my stay in England next month.

So far, I am really happy with the English classes in your school. I like the fact that the teachers are all native speakers, highly qualified and also very nice. The learning system, consisting of self-learning units on computer and classic group lessons, is a really good idea. This structure ensures that the students profit more from the group lessons by doing the computer lessons first. It is really great that the learning groups are small – up to a maximum of five students. Such a small number allows interactive dialogs so that everyone gets the opportunity to improve his pronunciation and vocabulary. There are also additional classes and events which assist conversation in English.

The negative aspect is that you sometimes have to wait for two weeks to attend the next lesson in sequence if you cannot take part in the classes at lunch time.

All together, I am really glad that I discovered and joined your English learning center.

I enjoy attending the lessons and, after only one month, I already notice progress in my English skills. I think having attended the English classes will be a big advantage for my stay in England.

## FIRE ON A MOUNTAIN TOP

by *Shalini Sairam – India*

A man named Ali was in need of money and asked his boss to help him out. His boss set him a challenge: if he could spend all night on top of a mountain, he would receive a great reward.

On the other hand, if he failed, he would have to work for free.

The story continues....

When he left the shop, Ali noticed that an icy wind was blowing. He felt afraid and decided to ask his best friend, Aydi, if he thought he was mad to accept the wager. After considering the matter for a moment Azdi answered:

“Do not worry, I will help you. Tomorrow night when you are sitting on the top of the mountain, look straight ahead. I will be on the top of the mountain opposite, where I will keep a fire burning all night for you.”

“Look at the fire and think of our friendship, and that will keep you warm. You will make it through the night, and afterwards, I will ask you for something in return.”

Ali won the wager, got the money and went to his friend's house. “You said you wanted some sort of payment in return.”

Aydi said, “It is not money. Promise me that if ever a cold wind blows through my life, you will light the fire of friendship for me.”

This story was inspired by an article on friendship published in Times of India, the national newspaper of India.

## How true is that?

“Life is what happens to you, while you are busy making other plans.”

- *John Lennon*

Why not write an article for

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### Possible topics for the November issue

- Write a portrait of an awesome city worth visiting.
- Is there a recipe for happiness? What's yours?
- Write an essay on “Getting old: what does it imply for the individual and for society?”
- Tell us about your experience of living in an English-speaking country, as a student, an *au pair*, an expat or something else.
- Write a story which begins with these words: “As time goes by...”
- What's your favorite iPhone app for learning English?

DEADLINE for your writing: **21 OCT 2011**

Please e-mail the editor:

[JUNE\\_WINTERFLOOD@YAHOO.COM](mailto:JUNE_WINTERFLOOD@YAHOO.COM)

### Group Courses – General & Business

We now have two group courses up and running:

General English – Advanced + Thurs 19:00-20:30

Business English – Upper Intermediate + Tues 7:15-8:45

You can join them at any time. Ask your consultant for details.

We'd like to start an Upper Intermediate Plus group course for General English in an afternoon time-slot.

Please contact the school if you'd like to go on our waiting list.

### What's on at English Center Basel

Remember to sign up at reception or telephone **061 269 41 41** to reserve your place at any of the following events:

#### GROUP ACTIVITIES

Go to [www.englishcenterbasel.ch](http://www.englishcenterbasel.ch) to see our calendar

#### PRODUCTION MEETING (What's Happening?)

Tues, 25 Oct – from 12:00 to 13:00

#### FCE / BEC V INFORMATION EVENING

Thurs, 3 Nov – from 18:00 to 18:30

#### FCE / BEC V ENTRANCE TESTING

Thurs, 3 Nov – from 18:30 to 20:00

#### SPEAKING PRACTICE APÉRO (all students)

Thurs, 10 Nov – from 17:00 to 19:00

### English Center Basel is on facebook

English Center Basel, Weisse Gasse 6, 4001 Basel  
Tel **061 269 41 41** E-mail [info@englishcenterbasel.ch](mailto:info@englishcenterbasel.ch)