

Vital News

The newsletter of "Vital Communicators Toastmasters Club
Club 7056, Division A, District 74



September 2004

Editor's note ...

There are those left brain dominant people – you know those clever, organised people. Then we have those right brain dominant people – those that work better with their hands than with their brains. I've been elected as Public Relations Officer for Vital Communicators ... with an absent left brain; it would have been easier to teach everybody to cross-stitch than being a PRO.

This year I will try to find my left brain and produce the best newsletter this club has ever seen!

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From the president's desk ...

Susan le Roux

Another first in this exciting Toastmaster's year – our first newsletter! Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter – it is you who made it possible! Thanks also to Joan who gave birth to it!

Our Club already has a lot to be proud of – our district governor – David Sutcliffe, DTM – visited the club and contributed to our planning for the coming year. What great ideas were generated that evening! It was wonderful to get such enthusiastic contributions from all the members in attendance.

Frances has been elected as Lieutenant Governor Marketing, serving on Cabinet, which is fitting recognition for all the work she so willingly puts into Toastmasters. She has attended the International Toastmasters Convention in Reno, Nevada in the USA and came back with stacks of information and new ideas from which all of us can benefit.

She co-ordinated a Youth Leadership Course at the Centurion High School, in which 12 learners participated. Cooks, Joan, Perrin, Willem and I assisted her, giving educations on the basics of Toastmastering. The children were great and we had a super banquet which they organised themselves and where they proudly received their certificates. This really was an outstanding group, who will be invited to visit our club so you can meet them.

As you know Frances also completed her DTM. The plaque to "proof" this will be presented to her during October.

Willem has been elected as Area Governor for Area A1 and is hard at work. He now has 5 clubs to look after and to visit. He has already visited all of them more than once and as one club is an ailing club, we attend all their meetings. He organised a very successful Humorous Competition for Area A1, which was well attended. He also revived the Area

Council which totally dormant for the last few years with excellent results. The Toastmasters fun just never stops!

Two other members, Joan and Perrin, have been nominated for the "Young Toastmaster of the Year" Award which will be awarded at the mini-conference to be held from 8-10 October 2004. They have been nominated because of their willingness to represent the club outside meetings, participating in the Youth Leadership course, during their first eighteen months as new Toastmasters. Being nominated is already being a winner. Good luck to Joan and Perrin.

The night we raided Forum Club will always be a night to remember. The total disbelief on the face of their president is a picture I will cherish. Thanks to everyone who went with – we will do so again in future, than make sure that you do not miss out!

What can we look forward to? Many exciting club meetings, at least two social functions and lots and lots more... Remember, we need the following for the club to be President's Distinguished third year running. Four people to complete their CTMs, Willem and myself will complete our ATMG and ATMB respectively and everyone to pay their semi-annuals dues before the end of September and before the end of March. Thanks to all the club officers who attended the Club Officer Training in June/July – that ensure that we have already obtained ½ of one of the points needed for this.

Promote Toastmasters in general and our club in particular wherever you go and bring those guests so that we can convert them into members!

Reno, Nevada

Frances Boshoff

My first International Convention was an awesome experience. Thank you District 74 members for affording me the opportunity!

We shall I start? Arriving at Reno airport on Saturday, 14 August was an interesting experience ... slot machines on the airport?

Bright and early on Sunday morning training for the district officers started ... 07:30 ... I don't even get up that early for work! Now, in my books – that's dedication!

The training concluded on Monday after lunch and I decided to take a bus into Reno ... The biggest little city in the world! for some shopping. The friendly bus driver instructed me on which bus to take where and how to get back to the Reno Hilton.

Monday evening was the traditional D74 wine tasting for which I carted 2 bottles of wine through Switzerland, Chicago and final destination Reno.

Tuesday was the only free day and David, Elize, Kobus, Beth and I rented a car and drove to Lake Tahoe, had a cowboy breakfast at Ponderosa Ranch.

We had to be back at the hotel at 15:00 as Beth had to start getting ready for her campaign for International Director for districts not assigned to regions (used to be districts outside of US and Canada). Tuesday evening was also the evening that Douglas won the first round of speaking ... to compete in the World Championship of Public Speaking on Saturday.

Wednesday was dedicated to supporting Beth in her endeavour to become the International Director. The team walked around with pages of photos finding District Governors to make appointments to speak to Beth. Try spot the person from a 10-year old photograph. Amazing what they do for these campaigns ... pens, badges, paper, more paper, more paper, etc ...

Thursday marked the start of the conference and I decided to attend the sessions on Leadership. I had the opportunity to listen to the most amazing speakers and of course Stephen Covey – an eloquent speaker with an amazing voice.

As this space is too short for everything, I will just have to speak again and again at our club meetings!

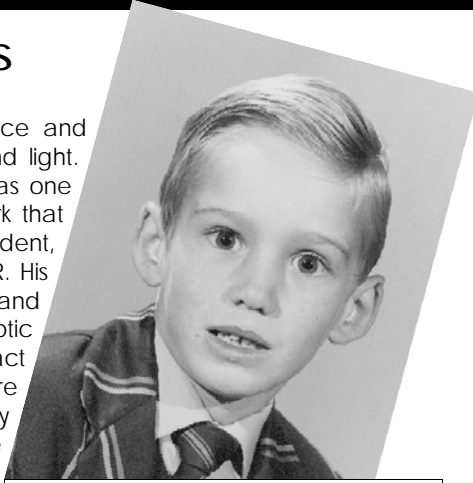


Reno, International Airport

Curiosity is the key to
creativity
~ Akio Morita ~

Spotlight on Bertus

Bertus has a passion for science and more particularly for optics and light. His career can be described as one focussing on these, from vacation work that he did at CSIR as undergraduate student, right through to his current work at CSIR. His current work involves measurement and calibration associated with fibre optic equipment and light. Owing to the fact that some of their laboratories are painted pitch black and because they switch off the room lights to do work, he usually tells people that He "measures light and he does so in the dark". He considers light and fibre optics as particularly exciting because of its widespread and growing technological use and its key role in modern telecommunications and the internet.



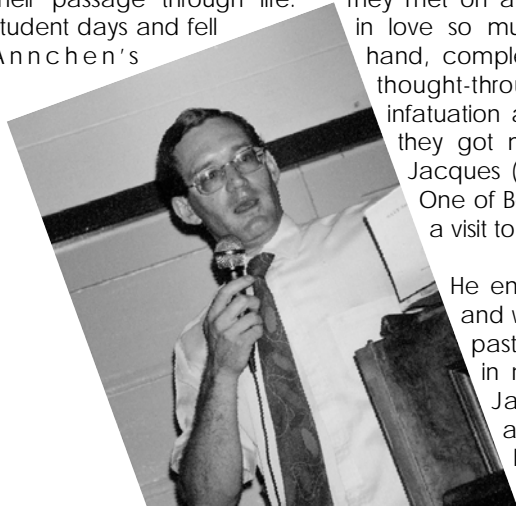
Bertus during first part of his primary school years

Bertus was born in 1965 in Alberton and grew up on the Witwatersrand (in Gauteng) and Greytown (Natal). One of the things that he particularly liked about Greytown was its rural setting and surrounding plantations. He often went jogging in the plantations and together with friends went on excursions.

In school his favourite subjects were Science and Mathematics, though he generally also did well in his other subjects. He participated in athletics (sprinting & middle distances), rugby, cross-country running, chess and the cadet band (playing trumpet). In standard 4 he earned the nick-name "Wioletjies" because of his speed as sprinter and speed on the rugby field. He matriculated in 1983 at Hoërskool Florida (Roodepoort).

CSIR gave him a bursary, on which he studied BSc at RAU, majoring in Physics and Mathematics. He continued post-graduate studies eventually completing an MSc in Physics in 1991. He did National Service in 1990 and also started working full-time at CSIR during the latter part of 1990. Bertus' philosophy about qualifications is that it forms only a preparatory part of one's career and that the secret to a successful career lies in a passion for what you do & hard work & knowledge & skills that you subsequently add, including those offered by Toastmasters.

The love of his life is Annchen. They are Christians, getting from their creator, light for their passage through life. They met on a church youth camp during their student days and fell in love so much, that Bertus ate right out of Annchen's hand, completely forgetting his previously well thought-through scientific approach to infatuation and love. Two years later in 1989 they got married. They have two children, Jacques (aged 10) and Riaan (aged 1½). One of Bertus' ideals is to take Annchen for a visit to romantic Paris.



Applying his Toastmaster skills by being Master of Ceremonies at a concert of the nursery school where his wife works

He enjoys spending time with Annchen and with his children. His other favourite pastimes are backpack hiking, being in nature, and training athletics with Jacques. He considers some adrenalin and exhaustion as fun, so he also enjoys white water rafting and has participated in a few bicycle races in recent years.

Bertus joined Vital Communicators in 1993 and has completed ATM-bronze. He has

served as President, VP-Education (twice), and VP-Public Relations. His first term as VPE came within less than a year after joining Toastmasters, because no-one else wanted to take on the responsibility. He says his progress through the C&L program has been much slower than ideal. Yet, through Toastmasters he has definitely grown his public speaking skills, self-confidence, organising skills and even improved his English and writing skills. He says he is particularly thankful towards Vital Communicators and its members who have contributed to these.



Centurion High School Youth Leadership Group

Mentoring ... the more the merrier

Willem le Roux

Why mentoring? Members usually think the task of a mentor is to assist their mentee(s) in preparing speeches. That is part of their task, but only a small part! Supporting the member and informing the member on other Toastmasters activities and tasks is just as important.

Especially the first few speeches need the personal assistance of the mentor. The mentor should, however, not rewrite or change the content of the speeches. It is very important to suggest specific improvements in the structure and delivery of the speech. For this purpose it is advised that the mentee visit the mentor, but it could also be done telephonically. If the structure of the speech is the main concern and not the delivery, it could even be faxed or emailed and the suggested improvements discussed telephonically. It is, however, important that the speech should not be marked as an essay – we are not teachers teaching our students the correct ways, we are mentors suggesting general improvements (writing the speech should remain the work of the mentee!).

From the start the role of the mentor is not only in giving advice on the mentee's speeches but also in giving emotional support. In the first few speeches the fear of speaking in public is the main obstacle that should be overcome. The mentee should be encouraged to deliver those speeches so that he/she can overcome that fear. The fear of criticism or negative evaluation is often a more serious problem to overcome. We all want to be accepted by our peers and criticism or fear is often seen as a threat to this acceptance. Because of this, most of us develop the fear of criticism. Reasons being different personal history or childhood background this fear could differ vastly from person to person. To improve our public speaking abilities we, however, need some feedback from our peers. The whole purpose of Toastmasters is to provide such feedback in a non-threatening environment. However, because of the lack of experience or personal problems some members will give negative feedback which could demotivate or even frighten the new member. The mentor should help his mentee to overcome this problem by always having a personal feedback with his mentee after his/her speech especially after harsh or negative feedback. The mentor's main task is to enhance the supportive, non-threatening environment we promise the new member.

Lastly the mentor should help to inform the mentee of all the activities of TMI. The mentee should for example be told more and encouraged to take part in the leadership opportunities Toastmasters offer. He/she should know and be motivated to continue with his/her Toastmasters training after obtaining the Competent Toastmaster (CTM) award. Mentee should be encouraged to attend area and division meetings and district conference and to help the club in their speechcraft and/or Youth Leadership courses. All mentors might not have all this knowledge because they are for example not participating in the leadership opportunities offered. For this reason each mentee should be encouraged to have more than one mentor.

If our mentors could practically help and support their mentees with their first few speeches, always give them emotional support and encourage them to fully participate in the personal development opportunities offered by Toastmasters. To start off this process we have appointed mentors to all new members and members that have given six or less speeches. We will, however, encourage more experienced members who feel the need, also to ask for mentors and for new members to choose a second mentor themselves if they feel the need. The more the merrier ...

A TM poem by Susan le Roux

A lady called Cooks
Visits other clubs for a "smooch"
She like Forum the best
And when she is a guest
She gets smooched out of her boots

Gert was once very shy
At meetings he said: "hallo" and
"goodbye"
He was surprised to find
That the club did not mind
For his humour was sharp on the sly

A Toastmaster named "William"
Joined Toastmasters for the fun
He gained confidence doing speeches
His humour had everyone in stitches
Now he is one in a million

An experienced Toastie called Frances
Certainly takes all the chances
She has a two-year plan
To catch her man
So Yankies, look out for her advances

You play the way you
practice
~ Anonymous ~

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