

ENGLISH CENTER BASEL WHAT'S HAPPENING?

MAY-JUNE 2012

News and Views from the Students and Staff

FREE ~ ISSUE 21

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FOUNTAINS OF BASEL CITY

by **Guido Kuhn**
Switzerland

Water is a – or the – primary commodity.

In medieval times, Basel had the oldest method of water supply: sidewalk fountains which provided households and, via their troughs, horses with water.

In the middle of the second half of the 19th century, the drinking water supply was provided in a new way. New piping as well as a reservoir was constructed up the "Bruderholz".

In July 1882, the new pump station "Lange Erle" was built and this meant that lever fountains were replaced by another type of fountain, but this type of fountain was not popular and a competition for a new design for a sidewalk fountain was announced. Wilhelm Bubeck won the contest with his design of the Basilisk fountain in 1884. Bubeck had an education in architecture and was director of the *Gewerbemuseum* and the first director of the *Allgemeinen Gewerbeschule* in Basel. Unfortunately, he died in a railway crash in Münchenstein in 1891.

About 1890, the market place was expanded and, in 1892, the old valve and lever fountains were replaced by two Basler Basilisk fountains, which stayed in place for four decades.

The Basler Basilisk fountains were cast at the *Roll'schen* ironworks near Balsthal. Over time, dozens of these fountains designed by Bubeck were made.

The main elements of the Basler Basilisk fountain are the sculpture of the Basilisk spitting water from its beak, a shield with the Basler coat of arms, a round ornate bowl at the top of a filigree column and, at the base, a shell dish from which dogs can drink.

Today, there are about twenty Basler Basilisk fountains in Basel City. The oldest active Basilisk fountain stands near Totentanz in Basel.

Several Basilisk fountains have left the Basel City canton as presents to other places, for example:

Badisch Neuenburg (Germany)
Zürich (Switzerland)
Huningen (France)
Anwil (Canton Basel Country)
Wien (Austria)
Shanghai (Republic China)

Giving and receiving

TWO SPECIAL EVENTS

by **June Winterflood** Canada

In this issue of What's Happening? you will see a few articles on Karin Braun's story about a dog shelter in Italy. With enthusiasm and passion, Karin has taken on the task of helping Lia, the owner of this dog shelter, to continue her excellent work. English Center Basel School of English is also committed to her cause and has offered the space for her latest fundraising event which will be on **June 23**, from **18:00** on the roof terrace of the school.

An Italian **Pasta Festival** will take place after an impressive demonstration of police dogs to give us an idea of their field of action and their very sensitive noses.

The other special event is a contest. Fill in the crossword and answer the few questions (see over) and you could win a prize! Photocopy the crossword and hand it in to reception, we will pick the winners on **July 19** at our **Speaking Practice Apéro**.

First prize is a unit of English studies at English Center Basel School of English for a friend of the winner, a value of 450 CHF.

Second prize is a year's subscription to "Journal de Bâle", a value of 78 CHF.

Third prize is an "English Center Basel School of English" T-shirt, a value of 35 CHF.

Basel's English & German magazine

JOURNAL DE BÂLE

You might be surprised to learn that the 70-page magazine for Basel is written in German and English – not French. The reason for the title, 'Journal de Bâle' is to remind its readers of Basel's links with the French language.

The magazine comes out every two months and provides a rich mixture of history and insight into Basel and area, particularly for the expat community, but it should be of interest to anyone who wants to take a closer look at Basel. For more info: www.journaldebale.ch

What's on at English Center Basel

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

SPEAKING PRACTICE APÉRO

A chance to speak English in a sociable and relaxed way.

Friday, 15 June from 17:00 to 19:00

Thursday, 19 July from 17:00 to 19:00

WHAT'S HAPPENING? MEETING

A chance to suggest topics for the next issue of "What's Happening?" and to discuss new layout ideas.

Thursday, 21 June from 12:00 to 13:00

Thursday, 26 July from 12:00 to 13:00

SHM PASTA FESTIVAL FOR LIA

A chance to see police dogs in action, to find out more about Lia's dog shelter and to enjoy a lovely evening meal.

Saturday, 23 June from 18:00

If you cannot come to the Pasta Festival, consider the following ways to help:

- Take out a membership in the SHM association for 25.00 CHF a year or help with a donation
- Visit another event SHM will do in future
- Choose one of Lia's dogs as your new family member
- Help Lia in Umbria with her daily work

For more info: www.hundehilfemittelitalien.ch

Why not write an article for WHAT'S HAPPENING?

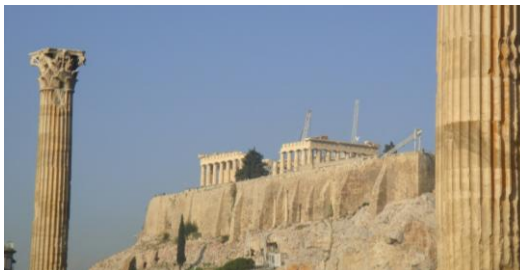
Possible topics for July & August

- How are you saving the planet?
- Describe short holiday trips in and near Basel.
- How can you get in contact with English-speaking people in Basel?
- Where are you going on your summer holiday?
- Describe a city worth visiting.
- What's your favourite app or website?
- Insider Tip: Cooking, Travel, Restaurants, Learning English, etc.

DEADLINE: 21 JUNE 2012

Please e-mail the editor:

JUNE_WINTERFLOOD@YAHOO.COM



WHAT CAN GREECE LEARN FROM THE PAST?

by **Peter Häusler** Switzerland

In the ancient world, people had the aim to secure their own survival, their daily needs of food and the future of their children. Even 1000 years before Christ, people started to organize their living together with fiats, regulations and laws. About 600 years B.C., Greece noticed that they had the privilege of a favorable climatic location of their landscape. Thanks to the fatness of the land, they had to work less for survival than others. Therefore, they were able to develop skills in music, dance and also in all topics of science earlier than the rest of the world. We all know that Greek scientists, like Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras etc., did sustainable research for world science.

Greece was one of the first countries in the world which, before Christ, implemented a functioning tax system. They defined four social classes. The higher people were in class, the more civil rights they could enjoy. The amount of tax paid defined the ranking in this class society. Greece had more citizens who indicated a higher income on purpose than the opposite. The fellowship in an upper class was the incentive for this overpayment. This was just before the turn of the first millennium after Christ. We all know today that this behavior has unfortunately changed in the meantime and caused, in part, the structural financial problems in their states.

This country has a glorious history. Its cultural sites are contemporary witnesses of the past and are, besides a unique landscape, the principal magnet of tourism. The tourism business contributes about 17% of the GDP and employs circa 20% of all jobholders. Because Greece is heavily in debt and has proportionately little manufacturing industry, the whole population and the economy suffers in the current debt crisis.

Not long ago, Greece had a democratic vote for the parliament. The socialist Pasok party lost 119 from 160 seats out of a total of 300 seats in their parliament. In my opinion, the people of Greece punished the social party as an overreaction about the past. The result of this overreaction is a no-win situation for everyone involved and the politicians have lost the courage to take responsibility in this very difficult economic situation. Sometimes, democracy shows too much emotion and therefore it can exaggerate reality. I wish that Greece could realize that, in such circumstances, the democratic system shows some weaknesses.

What kind of lessons can be drawn from this state crisis?

- The tax system must be equitable and fair for all persons liable for taxation
- The increasing discrepancy between social classes disturbs the sense of solidarity
- Democracy is as relevant as the economy. Both sides have a great interdependence which deserves necessary respect
- The balance between capital and work must be better
- Austerity and humility are required of all social classes and people with structural deficits
- Austerity mustn't exclude economic growth
- Employment for young people must be the main target for European politics. They are our future

I hope Greece regains a more important role in worldwide shipping logistics, increases their industry sector to a quarter or a third of the GDP, and invests much more in the public traffic system, especially in the railway network. I wish that the sense of togetherness will expand to the whole of Europe and a rising wave of tourism will demonstrate solidarity to all people.

In my opinion

ENGLISH CAN TAKE YOU FAR

by **Mireille Nügelin** Switzerland

The first time that I realized that it was high time to catch up on studying English was at Easter almost 10 years ago. My brother had won a prize for a weekend in Copenhagen in a competition and, due to the fact that he had split with his girlfriend, I was the lucky person who had the chance to escort him.

The city was well worth visiting. But what upset me all the time during our long Easter weekend was the fact that I wasn't able to take part in the conversation between my brother and his friend who we met there. It was such an embarrassing experience. I said to myself, "That will never happen to me again!"

In addition to this, I wanted to be able to understand all of the lyrics of my favorite songs played on the radio. So I had plenty of reasons to catch up on my English, on what I had missed in the last 10 years.

And now, 10 years later, I have reached almost all of my goals. I was always interested in studying English, and despite some setbacks, I never gave up. English broadens your mind no matter what level of English you are currently at.

Set yourself a goal that keeps your motivation up, such as visiting London or being able to understand an interview with your favorite singer. As long as you have the motivation, you will be able to reach your goal far easier.

A project worth saving

HOW I FOUND LIA

by **Karin Braun** Switzerland & Italy

I'm half Italian and half Swiss, but I was born and I grew up here in Switzerland. Half of my spirit and my feelings are Italian. Being involved in an Italian project makes sense, because I'm very close, and attracted, to Italy.

How I became involved was all a chain of coincidences.

I have a house in middle Italy; the region is called The Marches. It's not very well known. It's a region bordering Umbria and Tuscany but they have not yet developed tourism there. It's still Italy, pure Italy, and there, on a hill, is my old farmhouse. I go there as often as I can. I must also say that I'm a vegetarian and animals mean a lot to me. I appreciate them very much, and I do whatever I can to protect them.

This project started last September. In the South of The Marches, there is a national park and I went hiking there. When I came to a village inside the park, where I had booked a room in a bed and breakfast, I saw a dog in a sad and miserable condition. He was starving; and I thought he had a broken leg, because he was limping and very thin. I thought to myself, "I have to save him, and I have to bring him to a veterinarian and do something. He needs help."

Helping him was not possible, because he was very afraid of humans. He escaped from me; he went into hiding and I couldn't find him. I searched for him, but he had disappeared.

I remained in contact with Sonja, the woman who owned the bed & breakfast where I had stayed for the night. I begged her to help me to save that dog. By chance, another woman, Brenda, came into the picture. She is an Italian animal-rights activist who works as a volunteer in a dog shelter in Perugia, Umbria, run by a woman called Lia. Over several weeks, Sonja, Brenda and I tried all we could to capture the dog. All our efforts were to no avail. The dog was too shy and scared. Through these two women – Sonja and Brenda – I came to know Lia, and as I was back in Switzerland at that time my contact with her was limited to phone calls, a countless number. I learned a lot about her activity and effort in her dog shelter and was fascinated by her idealism and all the sacrifices she was making every day.

The next "coincidence" was that two friends of mine, who live here in Switzerland Gilbert Klaus and Andrea Tschopp (Gilbert is a veterinarian) went on holiday to my house in Italy. I told them about the starving black dog up in the mountains and Gilbert reacted without hesitation. He took along a dart gun with anesthetic. He got the dog and took it to Lia's shelter. At the end of their holiday they brought him with them to Switzerland. He's living with me now. When Gilbert and Andrea came back, they said that they had never seen such an organization in a southern country before, especially Gilbert, who has done a lot of volunteer work, castrating stray dogs and cats, in Greece and other southern countries. What he saw in these countries had often been a disaster. Also, the animal shelters had been disasters, because they didn't have enough money or knowledge to run them correctly. As for Lia's dog shelter, he was convinced Lia was doing a perfect job and he was touched about so much unselfishness.

Last November I took a car and a trailer and packed it full of blankets, towels, cushions, dog beds, leashes, collars, medicine, and whatever we could use or find or get. I transported these goods to Lia's. So, I finally met her. And this is how it all began.

The way Lia keeps the dogs, all in a condition of very good health, is commendable. You don't see one bone. There are even some dogs, you could say, which she should put on a diet!

After I came back home to Switzerland, on November 20th, 2011, Gilbert, Andrea and I founded our association called SHM (Stützverein Hundehilfe Mittelitalien) to save Lia's project from economic ruin and to support her admirable project.

Fundraising is our number one priority. I'm the president of SHM, Gilbert the co-president, and Andrea the secretary. SHM is very active: we do one project after the other. We are always on the move, and we have been able, in only six months, to send Lia more than 16,000 francs. For such a young association, this is really a lot of money. At the moment, Lia is facing a situation with extremely high costs, as she has been forced by law to re-build, renovate and change most of her buildings and structures.

For more info: www.hundehilfemittelitalien.ch



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