



Dear Ladies of Agora,

One month of the New Year already has passed and our 20<sup>th</sup> ACI Conference in Milano is coming nearer....

In this newsletter you find a potpourri of charity activities mainly undertaken during the Christmas time. It is fantastic to see how often we organize charity activities and fundraising side by side with our relatives☺. And a very emotional letter from the educator of Mara Combined Primary School concerning our first international project “Eyes for the world”.

You also find some news from the countries and the second report of a former ACI president who is sharing her most memorable moments with us.

Yours in friendship

Brigitte

ACI Secretary 2015-2017

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My dear friends,

This year is going to be grand, this year is going to be splendid!

This year is going to see the best version of ourselves.

This year is going to give credit to its protagonists, namely the Past Presidents and Past Officers of Agora Club International.

This year is going to celebrate to the fullest the Twentieth Anniversary of our Association.  
In this rare atmosphere, I can't but say to each and every one of you:

"May you continue to embellish your family, your workplace, your Agora life, and the whole world with your lovely smiles!

May you continue to create dynamic connection and activate great friendships with all ladies in the Agora family, with all Members in our sister and brother associations, with all the people that embrace the spirit of Service and Tolerance!

May you continue to involve "Hand Head Heart" in your commitments and missions, knowing that the place to improve the world is first in one's hands, head, and heart!"

And finally I feel like saying "THANK YOU" to all Past Presidents and Past Officers of Agora Club International for their courage to face challenges , for their constant contribution to our advancement, for their precious sharing of the vision for a bigger future of Agora Club International.

So my dear friends, let's march on with a joyful and grateful heart throughout the year!

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Yours always in friendship and love  
Ly thi Thanh Thao  
ACI President 2015-2016

## Reports of the countries

### Germany – Charter of TC 42

On 26th of September friends from high north to far south assembled in the over 100 year old Capella hospitalis to celebrate the Charter of AC Tangent 42 Bielefeld. Charter President Sabine welcomed all guests at this magic place; Elisabeth from Godmother Club Walsrode lighted the candle of friendship and Andrea of AC Tangent 154 Munich as last chartered club read out the aims and objectives.



During her introduction words Sabine surprised us with blowing soap bubbles in the air as symbol for wishes, hope and dreams. The bubbles are standing for private wishes and hope; however, also for AC Tangent 42's wishes and dreams and for all those who didn't forget believing in wishes and dreams and who want to move something.

Then the exciting moment approached: National President Antje Meyn, Past President Kerstin from Godmother Club Walsrode and Charter President Sabine signed the Charter document! Welcome Ladies in our wonderful association Tangent and Agora!



The more relaxed part has been lots of humorous, funny or surprising speeches starting with Bielefeld's mayor, followed by many ladies and friends of the whole RT Family. Especially German national President Rudi was fascinated of our Ladies' power and promised to force the idea of 4 clubs 1 vision. Godmother club Walsrode first attuned their Godchildren with a "bird song" before performing a "special bird show" as sign of the Walsrode Vogelpark Town. The atmosphere was full of friendship and fun when Sabine terminated the ceremony.

Vitalizing with cake and coffee we continued laughing and having fun before the "Big Party" went on in the evening in the Sky Office of Schüco Arena highly over the roofs of Bielefeld. Thank you dear Bielefeld Ladies for having organized this fantastic Charter event!



In Friendship - Andrea, Carola, Jutta, Kerstin, Elisabeth; AC Tangent Walsrode



## **Four clubs –one vision, Side-by-side LC/ACTC and RT/OT Germany**

Four clubs – one vision is an objective we have to work on, day by day, locally, nationally and internationally. All for Nepal proved how powerful we can be together. In order to maintain, improve and foster the friendship between our partner clubs, Holger Cosse, national president RT Germany, invited the LC and ACTC boardmembers to attend the joint OT/RT councillors meeting in Berlin.



Sabine Engelbert Ursula Rudi Antje Holger  
ACTC-VP, 41 int.-VP, ACI-VP, OT-P, ACTC-P, RT-P

We exchanged information, learned about the progress of the Nepal project and assisted the signing of a MOU between RT an OT, a very special moment.

We spent an interesting week-end, with lovely ladies and friendly tablers. I want to encourage you to meet with your partner-clubs to learn to know each other and to improve and to strengthen good relationship. Four clubs – one vision, let us use our hands, head and heart to move forward in friendship and service.

## **Italy – Attending Half year meeting of 41 Club Italy**

What a profound joy to attend the Half Year Meeting of 41 Club Italy held on 21 November! Under a torrential rain, I made my trip to Villa Cesi in Nonantola (Modena) and arrived just in time for the Banner Exchange Ceremony and the Gala Dinner.

I received a very warm welcome from my friends of Ladies' Circle Italy, Agora Club Italy, Round Table Italy and 41 Club Italy.

We enjoyed excellent food and wine, lovely music and dance, pleasant company and stories. But what made this event so special was that for the first time, the four Presidents, Domenico Vannicola, President of 41 Club Italy, Diana Brioschi, President of Agora Club Italy, Lorenza Romano, President of Ladies' Circle Italy, and Franco Alletta, President of Round Table Italy, sat together at the same table.

The magical word “friendship” reigned over the atmosphere. More than ever, we realized that the close bond established by Four Clubs One Vision was the wellspring of energy, fun, and positivity.



You can feel the joyful and vibrant atmosphere of the Banner Exchange Ceremony.



I should say that this is a historic photo!  
4C1V

Thank you, my friends, for having contributed to give more colors, harmony, and light to the ACI painting I have so far envisioned.

Always in friendship and love, Ly thi Thanh Thao – ACI President 2015-2016

## Charity activities

### South Africa

Jumbles sales (each member donated clothes etc.) were organized by TC Kopano and they donated winter clothes including bedding, food stuffs and some items that where needed to 2 orphanages.

AC Strelitzia organized jumble sale at the Moths cottages.



AC Amarula donated "goody bags" to two schools (one primary and one nursery) in our Area. The ladies had great fun in buying the goods which were put into the bags. This included toys, sweets, clothing and school stationary. The primary school was Mara Combined Primary were 79 children received goody bags. We also gave them cold drinks and cakes on the day. The teachers were also treated to cake.

The nursery school  
were given  
the children  
gifts.



school was Mavuka nursery  
There were over 69 children who  
got goody bags. Needless to say all  
were very happy to receive the



Angela Brennan  
Secretary  
AC SA

## Austria

The first Highlights of Agora 1 Spittal Austria!

Agora Club & Lady Circle Spittal Side by Side together on the traditional Lions Charity „**Christmas-Market**“ with all Serviceclubs of this town Spittal, 5th December 2015, inner Yard of the Castl Porcia.

Self-made goods & food, self-baked ware were sold - it was a great success!



**Reading Small Wonders** – with and for the Clown Doctors

10th December 2015, Agora for the international known their book „Small Wonders“ was



Ladies arranged a reading Clown Doctors presented.

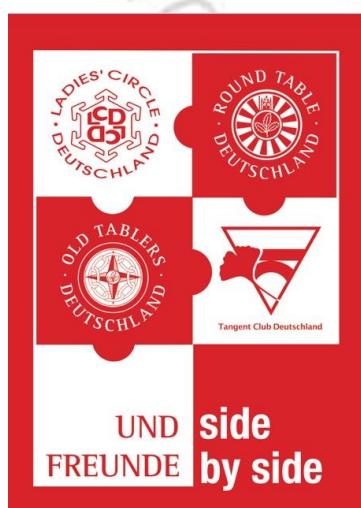
**„Rockabilly Party“** – Charity Party Lady Circle Spittal

16 th January 2016

Again together Side by Side with the Lady Circle 5 Spittal and our Agora Ladies results in a wonderful and great party, Slogan: 50 & 60 years with „the 5 Charity DJs & Spittals‘ Elvis Buzgi“



## Germany



**“Weihnachtspäckchenkonvoi “**  
Kids for Kids  
LC/RT project supported by ACTC/OT

The 5<sup>th</sup> of December 9.30 a.m. in the commercial zone of Hanau. Trucks and red jackets and yellow reflecting wests everywhere. It is cold and circlers, tablers and friends try to warm up by having hot coffee or tea. About 20 trucks, some busses and cars are forming the famous “Christmas convoy”.



On board about 150 ladies and tablers and the most important 65.000 Christmas parcels prepared by kids for kids. Shoeboxes with toys, books, bonnets, scarfs, teeth brushes and paste and soap. All these parcels had been collected, stored in storehouses, repacked and finally loaded into these trucks by hard working ladies and tablers.



41 intern.-VP Engelbert, 41 intern. - P Makarios

After some speeches and the distribution of a beautiful "Weihnachtspäckchenkonvoi-Calendar" "the convoy" started with a big applause and a chorus of horns for a long journey to Romania, Ukraine and Moldavia to bring a bit of joy and happiness to thousands of children. For most of them this gift will be the only one they will have for Christmas! A really heart-warming side-by-side project which is growing every year thanks to the devotion of so many members of the four partner clubs who use hands, heads and hearts to make children happy.



"Weihnachtspäckchenkonvoi" Kids for Kids LC/RT project  
supported by ACTC/OT  
Ursula Lejeune ACI VP 2015/2016

Iceland and our individual member  
Veronique Stern Still knitting baby hats  
for Africa!





## Our ISP "Eyes for the world"

# Mara Combined School



PO.Box 31  
Buysdorp  
0923

Agora Club  
Amarula

**Re: A Report on your contribution to our school.**

To whom it may concern

It is really an honour to write this report, but at the same time it is so overwhelming because of the fact that I don't really have the right words to express my appreciation!

I've met up with Angela Brennan and Sandy Van Niekerk when I was looking for people to help me with children who had eye problems. A lady, Nelly, put me touch with these ladies. Our school, Mara Combined School, is a small establishment consisting of 80 learners, 5 educators including the principal and 1 educator, paid by the school. We are a *Multi-Grade, NO-SCHOOLFUND Institute*, and therefore we have to rely on fund raisings and donations to keep our school afloat. Sometimes we just raise enough money to pay this one educator.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 these ladies visited our school with their team as well as the Optometrist from Spec Savers, Louise Trichardt and her team. They tested all 80 learners at our school, three of which needed glasses as soon as possible. These kids did not excel in their school work because of their eye problems. In a week's time they received their glasses, **FREE OF CHARGE!!!** Wow what a blessing this was to these kids and their parents. Two of these kids are in my class, one in Grade 1 and the other in Grade 3.

Nathaniël Oosthuizen, aged 8, is an Albino, who lives with his father who is epileptic. His circumstances at home are pathetic, to say the least. However, the fact that he now has glasses made a change in his school work with a 100%, from a 30% average to a 60% average.

Tylon Buys, went from a 50% average to 70% average. Veronique Buys, a grade 4 learner, went from a 40% average to a 60% average! What a change in these learner's 'self-esteem' and confidence. They participate in class activities and are so excited when able to see and do things that they could not see or do before because of their poor eyesight. These kids look after their glasses, handle it with care and wear it with pride. On that same day all learners received some school socks and sweets. Some of our learners received school shoes as well!

Thank you Agora!!!



## *Santa Shoe Box Event*

At the about the beginning of November, I received a request from Angela and Sandy to send our learners 'names, ages, sizes and gender. This was for the Santa Shoe Box event that they were planning for our school. I supplied them with all the necessary information. We've decided on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November for "Father Xmas" to visit our school. I also told the children that there is a big surprise

awaiting them. As children can be, they begged me to tell them about the surprise. It wasn't easy, but I just told them, Wait and See. Poor kids!!

Angela, Sandy and the rest of the Agora Team arrived at the school. You could feel the excitement in the air. The kids knew that something big was going to happen, but didn't know what exactly. I gathered them together, they were singing Xmas songs, and all of the sudden here comes "Father Xmas". They couldn't believe their eyes. The singing gradually got softer and faded away. Their eyes were glued to the scene in front of them. Remember, most of kids have never seen a "Father Xmas". The excitement and awe on these precious little faces touched my heart. I felt like crying at that moment, which I did at the end when thanking the Agora Team.

The gifts that the kids received were awesome. Clothing, toys, sweets, cake as well as juice. They took photos with 'Father Xmas'. Their bright and happy faces were something to behold. All thanks to the Agora Team!!

As expected, the kids wore their new T-shirts the next day. They looked so gorgeous in their new clothes.

Thank you Angela, Sandy and the rest of the Agora Team. May God richly bless you guys and the work that you are doing in touching people's lives, especially the lives of children. May you go from strength to strength. May your organization grow stronger and extremely blessed.

Ps. don't ever grow tired of doing good! Have a wonderful Xmas.

Thank you

With a Joy filled heart

Verna Lawrence (Educator)

## 20 years of History of ACI – Memories of Daniëlle Gardin, ACI president 2009-2010.

Dear friends,

My job as ACI president started as "VICE". It is the task of a Vice president to take care of extension, which I fully realised. When I came on board, our association only had 5 member countries: France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy and Romania. I felt that ACI was a fantastic association, but not well known enough or internationally promoted, and I made it my objective to change that. Luckily I had a fantastic board which was supporting me in that matter from the start. We felt we had to put our association on the map, to talk about it, to explain what we are standing for.....We were on board for new goals and adventures.

As past LCI-president I knew all about international friendship, and felt that it was time to give all past Circlers over the World the chance to join Agora Club International.

Over the years I had made so much time to contact them and explain our wonderful association.

I started to contact Sonja from Finland together with Nicole both were directly very first club in Switzerland – Léman good contact with RT and 41 Club, Guillaume Eveillard, (41 Club) start a club in Estonia for his wife Circlers of Estonia.



many international friends, it was about our open minded,

Estoppey , who I met in Helsinki Rueger a friend since 1994, they were enthusiastic and she started the 1. Also I have always been in touch with her (so one day I was contacted by France) who asked information to and eventually some Past



Nikkie Grewar, who was my Vice in LCI, was happy to start and promote Agora in South Africa; I was able to charter Amarula 1 and Strelitzia 2.



Also Yifat from Israel and Sylvia Mwansa from Zambia where following the idea of an international club after Ladies' Circle and where only happy to jump on the train.

Everywhere where I went I promoted our association, I felt that Agora International should become a platform for ALL PAST CIRCLERS , so after the AGM in Bruges it was decided to open up for Tangent countries who wanted to be part of our international family but by respecting the international rules of ACI. We were so happy to welcome Tangent Germany.



So internationally Agora Club had a baby boom and we were noticed by RTI and 41 Club international.

I started to communicate with Ravi RTI president, Randolph 41club International President, Kathleen Flynn LCI International President and tried to motivate to work internationally together. The 4 International Presidents all felt the same way and in 2009 during the 41 CLUB INTERNATIONAL AGM in Merano, we held a first international work meeting within the



4 associations.  
As from that day "4 CLUBS – 1 Vision" became a fact, it was decided that every country should follow this example.

I am very proud that today most of the associations are working under this motto, which can only bring the 4 associations more and more

together be it locally, nationally or internationally.

For the first time in history the four international clubs TOGETHER were donating for one international project: the earthquake of Ambrusio in Italy.



Growing as an association is one thing, but beside that my Board and I had to adapt the rules, install guidelines, re-writing goals.  
We wanted to give our association a younger look and also adapted with the agreement of the member

countries our banner and logo.....



I was so blessed to have a great team and an even greater secretary Veerle De Jonge, she and the Board stood by my side and together they made my dream come true.

My year as international President was a wonderful year!!!



My motto

Together we are one

became a fact!

Thank you ladies worldwide to continue this vision, thank you to continue to be open minded – I only have one dream left, which is that all Agora and Tangent countries will one day be together on the same platform... in that way all PAST CIRCLERS worldwide will be able to continue friendship after Ladies' Circle.

So ladies never give up, and believe in the strength of our association

Yours in international friendship,  
Daniëlle Gardin

See you in Milan!!



## Our barometer

### Calendar for Agora

- 1 March 2016 AGM AC Switzerland
- 3 – 7 March 2016 Boardmeeting 2 in Hyères
- 13-17 April 2016 Charter of AC Marrakech 3
- 16 April 2016 AGM AC Romania in Dubova
- 30 April 2016 AGM ACT Germaney in Dortmund  
[www.tangent-club.de](http://www.tangent-club.de)
- 7 May 2016 AGM AC Madagaskar in Nosy Be  
[www.agclub41madagascar.livehost.fr](http://www.agclub41madagascar.livehost.fr)
- 20 May 2016 AGM AC Malta in Valetta
- 28 May 2016 AGM AC Italy in Ascoli Piceno
- 28 May 2016 AGM AC South Africa in Louis Trichardt
- 30 May- 2 June Board Meeting 3 in Spittal
- 3 – 4 June Charter AC Austria in Spittal

