

# PUT EXCITEMENT INTO YOUR MEETINGS

## Notes on Session Conducted by Elizabeth Wilson DTM President's and VPE's Day, 17th September, 2001

In this session participants were introduced to the idea of holding a number (maximum 4) **Integrated Theme Meetings** each year. It is preferable that members, other than the VPE be responsible for the planning of these meetings. The preparation for the theme meeting would include decorations, food to be placed on the tables, a menu (if the club has a meal meeting), the physical meeting agenda, prizes and games that tie into the theme and the meeting program which would be prepared in consultation with the VPE.

### Criteria for Excellent Meetings

A discussion was held as to what were the criteria for excellent meetings. Participants suggested

- **Start** on time, **keep** on time and **end** on time
- Full involvement of members
- Conduct meetings where members can achieve their goals
- Prepare a balanced and organised agenda
- Have variety and flexibility
- Enjoyment
- Humour
- Recognition of achievement
- Support of both new and continuing members
- Welcoming atmosphere and welcoming of guests and members
- Have a variety of speeches
- Non-threatening atmosphere
- Have an element of surprise

### Creating Theme Meetings

Some possible themes suggested by the group included

Choose a Season	Humour
Australia Day	Trains and Planes
St Patrick's Day	Choose a country (Italy, Japan etc)
Melbourne Cup	Wine
April Fools' Day	The Play's the Thing
St Valentine's Day	Rock and Roll
Anzac Day	Music
Kindness	Friendship
Dreams	Christmas
The Internet	Toastmasters International
Disasters	The Stock Market
History of Your Local Area	Champions
Into the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	The Wild, Wild West
Letting Off Steam	Camera, Lights, Action
Healthy, Wealthy and Wise	Thinking beyond the Square
Halloween	Caring and Sharing
Kangaroo Court	Current Week, e.g. Education, Volunteers

Those attending then prepared meeting plans relating to specific themes. Their ideas are summarised in the following pages.

**Elizabeth Wilson, DTM**

Candidate for International Director from Districts Outside the USA and Canada  
Website [www.elizabethwilson.id.au](http://www.elizabethwilson.id.au) Email [Elizabeth@ElizabethWilson.id.au](mailto:Elizabeth@ElizabethWilson.id.au)

## 1. WINE

**DECORATIONS:** Wine bottles, Wine advertisements, cut-out cardboard grapes  
Advertising from wine producing regions  
On Tables – mini bottles of wines, corks with flags in them

**FOOD:** On tables – cheese cubes, water biscuits and wine glasses

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Wine glasses with winner's names painted on them on the night

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Instead of gavel, use corkscrew and wine bottle  
Introduction – Allow 10 minutes for Toast so speech can be made on wine making prior to Toast given

Table Topics – Celebration when wine is used

Assignments - Wordmaster, Poetmaster, Laughmaster

Debate - Wine v Water

Speeches - Persuasive Speech on selling wines  
Storyteller  
Show What You Mean

Conclusion - 5 minutes on Listeningmaster or Quizmaster

## 2. A SEASON – “SUMMER”

**DECORATIONS:** Big yellow sun, pots of sands with umbrellas, mirror with sand on top, beach balls

**FOOD:** Corn chips, cold prawns, fruit punch and fruit juice

**MENU:** Sunburnt chicken with block out sauce, surfing salad

**MEETING AGENDA:** Big sun/wave breaking in corner

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Life savers, summer fruits eg bananas  
Pass the orange with your chin

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Table Topics – What's Your Favourite Summer Activity  
Speeches: How to Build a Passive Solar House  
Ride a Surfboard  
Summer from an Earthworm's Point of View

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### 3. THE INTERNET

**DECORATIONS:** Computer printed banners, set up as an Internet café, each member takes a creative email address related to their name and personality, Mice (pretend)

**FOOD:** Fast Food, Serve on Mouse Pads

**MENU:** Megabyte pizzas, Mice meringue dessert, SAVE Savouries, DELETE Drinks

**MEETING AGENDA:** Decorate with computers and computer/Internet symbols, email it to members, format as web page

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Most creative email address (chosen by vote)

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Table Topics retrieved from recycling bin  
Table Topic Question – Describe your web page  
Manual Speech – PowerPoint Presentation  
Frustrations Accessing the Net

Computer Jokes

Introduce members by email address when giving assignments

### 4. ROCK AND ROLL

**DECORATIONS:** Posters, LP's, Guitars  
Music Notes, Juke Box, Music  
Table Decorations (Lights) – Paper cups etc

**FOOD:** Rock and Roll named items eg Elvis Pretzels etc

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Guess the Song, Name the Artist  
Complete the lyrics  
Costumes, self made  
Karaoke

Prize for Best Dressed

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Introduction – “Where was I When...: (Consider age/gender of audience)  
Hit number for the item number on agenda  
Favourite song from era  
Table Topics – Favourite Stanza (Sing and Speak it)  
Speeches : History and Storytelling and Fact Finding  
Short Business Session

Rock and Roll Name Tags (Famous Identities)  
Costumes

Fashion Parade – Walk and Clothing

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## 7. MUSIC

**DECORATIONS :** Music symbols, Pictures of famous composers, Old Gramophones, Records, CD's, Musical Instruments

**FOOD :** Cake in shape of a musical instrument  
Sixties Sweets (Fantails, Bobby's)

**MENU :** Mozart Mousse, Beatles's Fingers, Rock and Roll Salad

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Instrument shaped lollies  
Some CD's

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Speeches on Artists/ Trends in Music e.g. Rock-n-Roll/ Musical Instruments

Table Topics : Music Themes

## 8. KANGAROO COURT

**DECORATIONS :** Wigs, Gavel, Scales (Weights), Banners and Flags, Military Paraphernalia, Dock

**FOOD :** Bread and Water (Crusts), Lifesavers

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Whodunnit : Accused gets booby prize, each right guess gets a prize  
Best alibi

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Trial – Result already decided  
Case “Who murdered the fluffy pekinese dog?”  
Suspects : Husband, Wife, Milkman, Postman, Neighbour

If you have a dock, next presenter sits in dock  
Different names of roles – Chief Inquisitor (Topic Master)  
Bailiff (Sgt at Arms)  
Court Reporter (Secretary)  
Accused (Speaker)  
Judge (Meeting Chairman)

Table Topics - Alibis  
Trial By Inquisition

## 9. LETTING OFF STEAM

**DECORATIONS :** Kettles boiling water, Steam Engine Photos, Boxing Ring or Punching Bag

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Prize Belt, Certificates, Plastic Trains and Lollies

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Table Topics – What Cheeses Me Off  
Mini Debate – Steam V Electricity or Petrol or Diesel  
Speeches – Controversial  
Trains, Steam Engines

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## **10. ANZAC DAY**

(an Australian/New Zealand War Remembrance Day)

**DECORATIONS :** Flags (Aust & NZ), Huge Hats, Mood Music, Medals, Torch, Pictures, Red, White and Blue Balloons

**FOOD :** Sao Biscuits with Tomato and Cheese, Anzac Biscuits, Bully Beef, Vegemite, Lamingtons, Pavlova, Kiwi Fruit

**MEETING AGENDA :** Anzac soldiers on programs and Anzac Flags

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Chocolate Coins (Gold with ribbons)  
Packet of Anzac Biscuits  
Hanky with Gallipoli Sand (From any beach)  
  
Two Up – Old Coins  
Guessing Competition  
Celebrity Heads

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Toast to Anzac  
Recording of Bugle Playing Last Post  
Table Topics – Anzac These  
Humorous Wartime Story  
Speeches – Anzac Heroes  
History of Anzac  
Weapons of War

## **11. APRIL FOOL'S DAY**

**DECORATIONS :** Funny face masks  
Famous April's Jokes (From Newspaper Archives)  
Colour (Balloons, Dunce Cap)  
Each corner with chair and dunce's hat

**FOOD :** Empty lolly boxes  
Dried Peas

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Jokes, charades, prizes from joke shop

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Back to front program  
People reassigned to tasks – not as scheduled  
Speech – Origins of April Fools  
Storytelling – A Funny April Fool's Story  
Table Topics – Old Famous April Fool's Jokes

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## 12. ST VALENTINE'S DAY

**DECORATIONS :** Cupids, Film tars posters. Red Flowers, Heart Shaped balloons, Chocolates, Badges (Ideas from party shops)

**FOOD :** Champagne, Heart shaped strawberries, heart shaped savouries, gingerbread

**MEETING AGENDA :** Special stationery, Valentine Day cards, pink and blue  
Search www for ideas

**PRIZES/GAMES/MUSIC :** Romantic Music to be played "Some Enchanted Evening", "Come Fly With Me"

Balloons  
Dinner for 2 (Subject to Funds)  
Booby Prizes (Stuffed toys)

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Table Topics – Wedding Proposal  
Role Play (Reaction to situations)  
Speeches - Humorous  
Information (History etc)

## 13. A COUNTRY THEME - BALI

**DECORATIONS:** Tropical plants around the room  
Statues/Carvings on tables  
Bright coloured kites on the walls  
Sarongs  
Miniature Boats  
Lots of colour  
Indonesian Music in background

**FOOD:** Rice, Lobster, Curry, Hot chillies  
Nasi Goreng  
Bin tang Beer  
Blue moon cocktails  
Popcorn Nibbles

**MEETING AGENDA :** Pictures of animals on agenda, monkeys

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Bright wooden ornaments

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Speech Demonstrate – Cooking Nasi Goreng  
Speeches – History  
Tourism  
Hindu religion

Table Topics Illness – Bali Belly  
Geography  
Politics  
Experiences  
Have you travelled, Favourite place

Go to Travel Agents for brochures

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## 14. HEALTHY, WEALTHY AND WISE

**DECORATIONS :** Bowls of fruit, chocolate coins, sporty gear, owls, agenda in shapes

**FOOD :** Healthy dried fruit, nuts, vegetables and dips  
Red wine for healthy heart

**MEETING AGENDA :** Shapes of owls, fruit and vegetables, \$ sign

**PRIZES/GAMES :** Bowl of fruit, chocolate coins  
Aerobic Session with a gym instructor. Ring bell throughout meeting with aerobics to follow

**MEETING PROGRAM :** Speech topics - Healthy - Wealthy - Wise

Table Topics - Fortune Cookies  
Sport Theme  
Food Theme

Business Session - Put forward a motion that incorporates Healthy, Wealthy or Wise eg club funds be held offshore, maybe Majorca

## 15. HUMOUR

**DECORATIONS :** Clown Masks, Whoopee Cushions, Decorated badges with ribbons, Funny Hats, Chattering Teeth

**MENU:** Jelly Belly or Quivering Jelly  
Lamb Shank  
Tripe and Onions, A load of Tripe  
Funny Faces on Biscuits  
Brains, Mad Cows' Brains  
Fairy Bread  
Laughing Cookies

**MEETING AGENDA:** Clowns and Smiley faces  
Jack in Box as Agenda  
Agenda written with Magic Pens  
Blank Agenda

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Magician/Magic tricks  
Laughing Teeth for best speech  
Night out at special place, middle of nowhere  
Laughing Bag

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Humorous Table Topics  
Humorous Speeches  
Make it the Humorous Speech Contest  
Make every assignment humorous  
Fictitious reports  
Reverse Agenda meeting  
Tall Tales Speeches

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## 16. TRAINS AND PLANES

- DECORATIONS:** Posters of aeroplanes etc  
Models of trains and planes  
Plane/Train mobile  
Arrange Meeting in shape of aircraft, i.e. aisles and seats, have seat numbers,  
Boarding passes and people check in  
Cardboard hats of hostesses/pilot  
If available dress up in uniform
- FOOD:** Candy in shape of transport i.e. planes, trains  
Aeroplane jelly
- PRIZES/GAMES:** Guess the destination  
Raffle for Mystery Flight or train trip
- MEETING AGENDA:** Agenda could have take off, departure times, stopovers etc  
Border/Symbols on agenda  
Could be in shape of luggage bag
- MEETING PROGRAM:** Find members who have travelled train routes/flights (eventful hopefully)  
to present speeches  
Table Topics to have Travel theme, i.e. possible scenarios

## 17. MELBOURNE CUP

(an Australian horse racing institution)

- DECORATIONS:** Jockey hats, Riding Stock, horseshoes, Ribbons/silks, Betting Slips, Winning Post, Streamers
- FOOD:** Canapés, Champagne, chicken, prawns, nibbles
- MEETING AGENDA:** Lots of Clip Art, Horseshoes
- PRIZES/GAMES:** Talking Heads, Melbourne Cup Trivia, Hat Parade  
Small bottles of champagne, Racing Tickets, Copy of Punters Pal, Lucky Horseshoe
- Um/Ah Award - bag of horse droppings  
Best man's Hat - Racing Guide  
Best ladies hat - Small Bottle Champagne
- MEETING PROGRAM:** Laughmaster - Racing Joke  
Race Starter - Welcome  
Race Caller - Evaluator
- Table Topics - Jockey, Horse, Fine Cotton Affair
- Speeches - Famous Horses, Phar Lap, Kingston Town  
Racing Identities, Tommy Smith, Gay Waterhouse

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## 18. CHAMPIONS

**DECORATIONS:** Medals, Photos of Sports, Business, World Leaders, Extraordinary People

**FOOD:** Chocolate Medals, Nutrigrain, Bowls of sultanas, Vitamins

**MENU:** Ian Thorpe Fish and other courses named after champions  
Dream Achieving Dessert

**MEETING AGENDA:** Dais  
Theme music (Rocky eye of the Tiger)  
Change names on Agenda, eg Coach, Starter, Sprint

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Trivia Quiz  
Who am I?

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Pass the Baton  
Story telling  
Debate  
Dress Up  
Mexican Wave

## 19. AUSTRALIA DAY

(a country's National Day)

**DECORATIONS:** Flags, Gum Leaves

**MENU:** BBQ, Lamingtons, vegemite

**MEETING AGENDA:** Australianise the Agenda  
Yellow paper, green ink

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Kangaroo Pins

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Reading - Australian  
Table Topics - Prime Ministers or Important Dates

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## 20. THE WILD, WILD WEST

**DECORATIONS:** Wagon Wheel, ropes, harness, horse equipment,  
Reward Posters, - "DEAD or ALIVE" of Toastmasters members  
Entrance Door made as Saloon entrance

**FOOD:** Beans, Corn on the Cob, Corn Beef, Roast, Whisky

**MENU:** Buffalo Bills Beef Burgers  
Wyatt Burp Beans  
RotGut Rid Whisky  
Guns a'blazing .....  
Spur on .....

**MEETING AGENDA:** Bullet holes paper  
Singed, burnt paper  
"Wanted" paper  
Topic written on playing cards

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Wagon Wheels (chocolate)

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Table Topics - Themes of The Wild, Wild West  
Timing device replaced by cap gun warnings instead of green, amber, red  
Sgt at Arms called Sheriff, Chairman is Town Marshall  
Outdoor Meeting, BBQ or Campfire  
Background Music

## 21. HALLOWEEN

**DECORATIONS:** Cut outs of witches, pumpkins, bats, cats, spiders, Lollipop Ghosts.  
Maybe candles and dim the lights

**FOOD:** Popcorn, jelly beans, gummy snakes (in the tables)

**MENU:** Lurch's Lasagne, Creepy Crawly Chicken, Ferocious Fish, Bat's Wing Beef and have  
a jelly snake to top each meal.

**AGENDA:** To be decorated with Halloween style clip art or if lucky some commercial paper from  
Office Works (coloured)

**PRIZES/GAMES:** Make sure all receive one, Treat Bag of lollies etc  
Throughout the meeting have "Guess the Ghost" Spots. Members are assigned a "Ghostly  
character and have 30 sec. to guess who it is by just asking a partner questions which require a  
"Yes/No" Answer.

**MEETING PROGRAM:** Normal meeting program with special assignments slotted in.  
Round Robin, All tell a Ghostly Riddle  
Laughmaster: A Ghostly Joke  
Read/Recite: A Ghostly Poem  
Topics: Magic Spells  
Speeches: Storytelling (2) Tell a ghost story or retell own ghost story  
Speech on background to Halloween  
Speech on Halloween Customs

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