



Welcome!

In this very first issue of "The Honeycomb", published for 9-15 year olds in conjunction with the American Library in Karlsruhe Spelling Bee, we have a special interview with one of our judges, Dr. Virginia Teichmann. We hope you will enjoy it and that it will inspire you!

Dr. Virginia Teichmann: Word Lover



From l to r: Vincent Schulz, Dr. Virginia Teichmann, Milo Edward Holmes-Higgin McKoen and Maxime Doucet.

Three Junior Reporters – Maxime Doucet, Milo Edward Holmes-Higgin McKoen and Vincent Schulz (all Class GS 5E, European School, Karlsruhe) – were curious. They had the opportunity to speak with one of the judges for The Bee, Dr. Virginia Teichmann, who shares her experiences with us. Here is their interview:

Dr. Virginia Teichmann is going to participate as a judge in our Spelling Bee. She was a Senior Lecturer and Director of the International Office at the University of Education in Karlsruhe and she taught German in the USA before that. She is now retired and will be 66 years old in January, 2012. She grew up in Ithaca, New York. She has two younger brothers. After 36 years of working hard, she can pursue her hobbies, which are: knitting, embroidering, gardening, playing the piano, biking and relaxing with her friends.

Dr. Teichmann, why did you become a teacher?

It was unexpected. At the time when I was growing up, most women didn't have jobs outside the home. When I was 15 years old I started learning German. Then I started teaching German in the US. When I met my husband, we moved to Germany, and then I saw that English teachers were needed more than German teachers here, so I got a job at the University of Education teaching English.

Were you involved with words in your profession?

Yes, of course! I wanted my students to understand what the words meant when I taught them English literature.

Do you still love words?

Yes. I have always loved words, language and literature more than any other subjects.

Did you participate in spelling bees as a child?

I participated in spelling bees from the age of 5 to 13 (1st to 9th grade). But the one I really remember happened when I was in ninth grade.

Was that spelling bee large or small?

It was a large spelling bee for my grade level, so there were about 450 contestants.

Was it fun?

No, it was scary! There was a large audience and the press was also there.

Did you win?

I came in second place, right after Nancy K.

Was it challenging?

Not in one way because we were expected to know the words, and we had spelling as a separate subject at school.

What word tripped you?

"Judgement" was the word, because there are two ways to spell it. I can't remember which way I spelled it, but it wasn't the preferred spelling. After 53 years, I still can't remember which way is the preferred one!

How did you feel when you were eliminated?

I felt like crying, but I did not want to be humiliated in front of the others, so I resisted.

Why did you participate in the Spelling Bee?

I didn't have a choice because I was one of the top four in my spelling class. A friend and I were the best two spellers in our class. We were never put on the same team when we had practice bees so it would be fair.

Do you have any tips for us for our Spelling Bee?

It really helps if you can imagine what the word looks like. For instance, you could "write" it on your hand with a finger. It also helps to read a lot because then you see the words in a context that makes sense, so you remember them better. In English, words are not always spelled how they sound, like in German or Turkish, so it helps if you know where they come from, what their origin is.

Thank you very much for this interview!

Spelling Bee Fast Facts

- ◆ Registration closes: February 7, 2012
- ◆ ROUND ONE written tests: February 2012
- ◆ Finalists Notified: March 5, 2012
- ◆ Spelling Bee Final: March 17, 2012
- ◆ www.expat-karlsruhe.com/Spelling-Bee
- ◆ SpellingBeeKA@yahoo.de

