

The logo for Creative English Center features a red-to-white gradient bar at the top left and a grey-to-white gradient bar at the bottom right. Two curved arrows connect the ends of these bars, one pointing from the red bar to the grey bar and another pointing from the grey bar back to the red bar.

Creative English Center

TOPIC OF THE MONTH: CHRISTINE SCHNEIDER

FEBRUARY 2008

This month CEC Online starts its series of portraits about foreign people who left their country and are now living in Vorarlberg. Our first portrait features Christine Schneider from South Africa.

SP: Hello this is Sophie Paratte for CEC Online. Today, I'm interviewing Christine for a portrait. Hi Christine.

CS: Hi, hi.

SP: So, can you tell me your name, your full name and where you come from, please?

CS: Yes, I'm Christine Solveig Schneider and I come from South Africa originally.

SP: May I ask you what your star sign is?

CS: I'm a Taurus.

SP: Taurus.

CS: Yes.

SP: Very good. Ok. And where did you grow up?

CS: I grew up in a big city in South Africa called Durban. It's in the North East cost of South Africa.

SP: And what do you do?

CS: Well, I've got two jobs really. The one is I'm a housewife and the other is that I work part-time as a freelance English language trainer.

SP: Ok. Do you have any hobbies or interests?

CS: I have lots. I need them to stay happy. Well, my active weekly hobbies are I sing in a private choir. We have about two or three concerts every year in various towns here. I take organ lessons at the moment; I've played the piano all my life and I have a guitar as well that I like to play sometimes on my own, with nobody listening.

SP: Great. Ok. What would you say the best thing about your life is?

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CS: Oh, I've got more hobbies. Can I tell you more about them?

SP: Sure!

CS: The sports are typical for living in Vorarlberg: I ski in winter and I swim in summer and when the weather allows, any time of year, I love cycling. And I do keep fit. I try to keep fit with aerobics and Pilates on a regular basis. Otherwise my interests are in the arts world, concerts and also literature – reading, writing - and speaking foreign languages.

SP: Do you have a favourite author?

CS: Not really, no. No, but quite a few favourites.

SP: South Africans?

CS: No, no, no. No, right through. Canadians, you know, whatever.

SP: Good. Ok. So, what would you say the best thing about your life is?

CS: The best thing about my life. Ouah, that's going to be hard to put that in a nutshell. Well, I suppose having the circumstances that allow me to feel happy and stimulated, fulfilled and actually free. I feel very free. I'm never bored!

SP: That's impressive! Good. Ok. Do you have a dream job?

CS: Dream job. If I had stayed in South Africa, I would love to have continued my original career as a public health nurse. I have to say that my dream job is doing what I'm doing now because I have a variety of things. I'm my own boss. I can delegate my jobs according to my own personal – you know – needs, from the point of view of free time. I really do have a privileged situation.

SP: Do you have a dream you could share with us?

CS: Yes, of course. I've got plenty of dreams that I could share with you. I'm an open person and I'm happy to tell you that I would love to speak perfect German without one grammar mistake.

SP: Me too!

CS: That is my greatest dream! And I'd like to go and live in a little cottage high up in the mountains and write a book. Yeah, that kind of thing. It's always nice to have castles in the air.

SP: Yes.

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CS: Dream...

SP: Excellent. And what do you personally like about Vorarlberg?

CS: What do I like about Vorarlberg personally? For me, as a South African, what I appreciate very much about Vorarlberg is the safety factor – feeling secure. As a woman, I feel very very safe here. Not only physically, but also financially. Good – that's Austria, not Vorarlberg, but it's a good way of life here. The pace is slow; it's quiet here. And of course, the most obvious thing that one likes in Vorarlberg is the countryside – the lake, the mountains.

SP: Sure. Especially if you like cycling and hiking

CS: Yeah, exactly.

SP: Ok, thank you very much.

CS: Thank you so much.