

## LILT NEWSLETTER

September 2009  
Volume 29, Number 4

[WWW.LITFL.ORG](http://WWW.LITFL.ORG)

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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, some of our members will take their first steps into the profession, while others will continue on the path of what, LILT hopes, is a fulfilling career as a teacher of LOTE. LILT's promise is to be there for all LOTE teachers on Long Island, whether they are at the initial or more experienced stages of teaching. LILT hopes to infuse, through its many programs, the zest needed by all of us LOTE teachers to bring languages to life with enthusiasm and innovation for our students. I, along with the Executive Board, wish you a good start to the year and anticipate that this will be an exciting year for the organization and its members.

### **IMPORTANT NEWS**

The revised constitution has now been reviewed by Mr. Paul Margiotta, Esq. and has received the approval of the LILT Executive Board. This new version of the LILT Constitution is available for review and comparison with our present constitution online at the LILT website, [WWW.LITFL.ORG](http://WWW.LITFL.ORG). (*If you do not have Internet access, kindly contact me.*) After more than one year of work, there have been sweeping changes that have converted the constitution into a more comprehensive document. Some salient features of the revised constitution include: the institution of an Association Membership category for professional organizations; a Lifetime Membership category, and the elimination of the Joint Membership category. If ratified, the constitution will provide the opportunity for a member to be elected as a Member-At-Large representative to the Executive Board. The document also incorporates past and present procedures and policies. Therefore, it is important that all members take the time to read this revised document. Direct any questions you may have to our Constitution Committee Chair, **Richard Gentile** ([rgentile@liltfl.org](mailto:rgentile@liltfl.org)). It would be wonderful to have you join us by participating actively in the business of LILT. Please make every effort to attend the business meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup> to vote on the adoption of this new constitution; you will thus avail yourself of your right to have a voice in our

organization.

A nice way to kick off the school year is by attending our Fall General Membership Meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> (details on the next page). The Business Meeting (constitution vote), for members only, will be from 4- 4:30 PM. The dinner will begin at 4:30 until 7:30 PM. As usual, there will be a gift for all who attend, and a Chinese Auction of *Teacher Baskets*. Encourage a colleague to attend. Please come and introduce yourself to me, mingle with colleagues, and enjoy some social time in addition to voting on the new constitution. Please inform **Anahí Walton-Schafer**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, ([awaltonschafer@liltfl.org](mailto:awaltonschafer@liltfl.org)) as soon as possible about any LILT member, of whom we were previously not made aware, who retired after LILT's Spring Membership Meeting was held. LILT wishes to honor any such member at the Fall General Membership Meeting. To be honored a retiree should meet the constitutional requirement of a minimum of three current consecutive years of membership through this year.

The 2009 LILT Regional Conference Committee has worked all summer to produce what promises to be another highly professional and successful conference entitled: "Navigating in the Digital Age" to be held on November 14<sup>th</sup> at Bay Shore Middle School. There are two major changes for this year's conference:

**THERE WILL BE NO ON-SITE REGISTRATION  
AVAILABLE THE DAY OF THE CONFERENCE.  
ALL ATTENDEES MUST PRE-REGISTER.**

For the first time ever, one can choose to register and pay fees online for this conference on our website at: [WWW.LITFL.ORG](http://WWW.LITFL.ORG), or register by mail. Please register early! LILT has been attentive to our membership's suggestions, and now e-mail registration confirmation is also available. N.B.: **PLEASE CARPOOL AS PARKING IS LIMITED.** Off-site parking with shuttle bus will be available.

In September, when welcoming any new department member, please inform him/her about the many LILT activities, events and opportunities for professional development our organization provides, and encourage him/her to join. Not only does LILT provide activities for professional growth, but there are also many *LILT ways* of honoring and rewarding colleagues and students via LILT's

awards, grant and stipend opportunities. Information on all of the above can be found on our website: WWW.LILTFL.ORG. There has also been a change regarding the stipend to attend the NYSAFLT Conference. Beginning this year this stipend is not limited to the NYSAFLT Conference attendance only. Any member may apply for this stipend in order to attend *any* LOTE professional conference other than LILT. Please take advantage of these awards, grant and stipend. Explore the possibilities!

LILT will celebrate its 30th year in 2010 and we hope to arrange an anniversary celebration. There will be more news about this in an e-mail update and in the January 2010 issue of the Newsletter.

At a time when the economy has adversely affected the state of LOTE education on Long Island, it is essential we remain advocates for foreign languages, and find ways to promote them. It is therefore very important we remain active and united in this goal. I continue to stand with all of you for this purpose.

LILT sincerely wishes you a successful, pleasant and rewarding school year,

*Nancy Russo-Rumore*

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO...**

**Ann Chiet**, Harbor Country Day School, for winning the 2009 AATF Dorothy S. Ludwig Excellence in Teaching Award at the Elementary School Level.

**Melisa Enriquez**, LILT-AATSP Liaison, on the birth of her son, Evan Thomas.

**Alba Masullo**, former LILT 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, on the birth of her daughter, Leia Alessandra.

**Carlo Mazarese**, recently retired Italian teacher from Garden City HS, on the establishment by his students of the class of 2009, a scholarship in his name. He was known for his passion for learning and his keen sportsmanship as the boy's varsity soccer coach.

**Gina Palasciano**, Director of World Languages and ESL K-12, Deer Park Public Schools, who received the Administrator Service Award from SCOPE.

**Anahí Walton-Schafer**, Northport HS, for receiving a mini-grant from Suffolk's *Edge* for her project, *¿Me daría su autógrafo, por favor?* (Would you give me your autograph, please?) Students (age 7-10) will write, illustrate and publish their own autobiography in Spanish. **Ms. Walton-Schafer** also received one of five Teacher Achievement Awards from her district.

### **AAT NEWS**

**AATI Long Island:** Ida Corvino-Miletich, founder of the Italian American Women's Center, Inc. and Co-Director of Programma Ponte, was awarded AATILI's prestigious Dante Award for being an avid promoter of Italian and Italian-American initiatives.

AATI Long Island awarded three student scholarships at their annual end of the year meeting: Emily Grazia (Rosa Manzo, teacher), Diana Kesselman (Aurora O'Brien, teacher), and Frank Canella (Dr. Craig Butler, teacher).

October 2009 celebrates Italian Culture Month with a dual theme: *Galileo Galilei: Father of Modern Astronomy: The International Year of Astronomy 2009* (as designated by the UN), and *Giuseppe Petrosino: Saluting an Italian American Crime Fighter*. Go to [www.Italianculturemonth.org](http://www.Italianculturemonth.org).

**AATF Suffolk:** The French Institute-Alliance Française (FI AF) offers excellent teacher workshops once a month for French teachers on Friday nights, 5:30-8:30 PM. It also

includes a food tasting: \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. *Submitted by Anita Ekstam, Connetquot HS*

**AATSP** will be offering several important and useful workshops this fall.

*More information can be found on the professional calendar on the second to last page of this edition.*

### **ASL NEWS AND HONOR SOCIETY**

One or two of every 1,000 children born in the USA was born profoundly deaf. This statistic has not changed for decades. Today 40% of those children are receiving cochlear implants. This has risen from 25% only five year ago. For more information and to learn how the implant works, see: *Cochlear Implants Open Deaf Kids' Ears to the World* by Shari Roen, *The Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 2009

The new school year is a great time to join the ASL Honor Society. You and your students work diligently to learn and use ASL within the deaf community. Why not honor your students? Visit [aslhonorsociety.org](http://aslhonorsociety.org), or contact Tricia McCarthy at [deafinitelyasl@aol.com](mailto:deafinitelyasl@aol.com).

### **2009 STUDENT AWARD WINNERS' ESSAYS**

*Samantha McKenna, student of Susan Salzman, Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School*

I can come up with hundreds of words to describe my relationship with French: passionate, enduring, thrilling, *le coup de foudre*, but the two that stand out are challenging and nurturing. During the many years I have studied French, I have driven myself towards the ultimate goal of fluency. Though it has certainly been a challenge, it is one I

### **FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The Fall General Membership Meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the Holiday Inn, 215 Sunnyside Boulevard, Plainview. The Business Meeting will begin at 4 PM (LILT members only), and the dinner at 4:30 PM. The dinner, generously subsidized by LILT, will cost \$15.

***This is an extremely important meeting, please make every effort to attend.*** You will be receiving a flyer at home at the end of August. You may also get more information at LILTFL.ORG.

have been, and still am, more than enthusiastic to undertake. In the course of my arduous trek through the labyrinth of French grammar, structure, and vocabulary, my path has never been obscured, and my steps have never faltered. Instead of fading, the light at the end of the tunnel grows steadily brighter and burns with greater intensity.

Simply by existing and providing this constant challenge, French nurtures and satiates the very essence of my never-ending yen for knowledge. As hard as I work to learn French, I will never run out of words or phrases to discover, and I will never reach a point where I don't have to put an effort into my speech and writing. That fact isn't discouraging by any rate; in fact, it exhilarates me, because I know I will never get bored of French. I will master the French language, but I will never be its master. I count on the language to evolve, and I count on being strung along with it my entire life.

My love for French has also led me to seek out study in other languages, especially Italian. I adore each language on its own for its wonderful sounds, ebbs, and flows, but learning both side-by-side is another wonder in itself. My face lights up like a kid in a candy store when I can make connections between structure or idiomatic phrases in French and Italian that help my understanding. It's sensational to be able to draw from my store of knowledge in each language to enrich my fluency in the other. I hope in the future I will be able to delve deeper into other languages, especially German and Portuguese, which I find remarkably complex and intriguing.

The best future I can imagine for myself is one in which my fluency in French, as well as a deep knowledge and proficiency in Italian, and possibly Spanish, Portuguese and German, will allow me to aid and educate others. I can see my life pan out in two directions as a part of Doctors Without Borders, or working at the United Nations. Without a second or third language, I would be at a sore disadvantage, and so would the people I would work with everyday. I feel confident going out into the world on my own knowing, that because I have been an eager student of languages, with no intent of ever slowing down, I can have a more positive impact on those around me in the classroom or in my field of study.

*Amanda Rosen, student of Graceanna Maiello,  
Elwood John Glenn High School*

...I boarded an overnight train with the rest of my

People to People Student Ambassador delegation. Our destination was Venice, one of the most anticipated stops of our 3 week European tour. I had been studying Italian for 3 years, and I was excited to see how understanding the language would enrich my travel experience. I will never forget waking up the next morning and staring at the canals of Venezia. The colors will be engrained in my mind forever: the vibrant gold on the tips of the gondolas, the faded red of the buildings on the canal, the clear blue-green of the water. This was the place, I thought to myself that I have been learning about for years. This is the place that speaks the eloquent and beautiful language I am learning to speak. This is the place.

Over the next 8 days, I traveled down the boot-shaped peninsula, stopping in cities along the way. I loved gazing out the window of our coach bus and looking at the street signs, knowing that I could read the words. I listened to the conversations of the vendors on the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, trying to decipher the fast-paced dialects. I would

pick up brochures to the museums in both English and Italian, reading Italian first and then checking myself with English. I would teach my friends simple Italian phrases and help them ask the locals where the bathrooms were or how much the Venetian glass necklace cost. I felt connected to the places that I was visiting in a way that no one else was because of my knowledge of the language.

When I returned to school the following September and resumed my language studies, I was able to put everything in

context. I had now been to the land the language rolling off my tongue originated in, and that made it easier to understand. My knowledge of Italian culture was greatly enriched by my travels, and I understood some of the more intricate connections between culture and vocabulary. Studying the language helped me enjoy the country, and the country helped me understand the language, I have been back to Italy since that first time, and every time I go, I learn new lessons in communication and history.

...Now, more than ever, we live in a global society. The Internet has revolutionized communication; cross-continental dialogue is as easy as typing on a keyboard. Continents are connected in ways that our ancestors would have never dreamed of. That being said, it is easier than ever to communicate cross-culturally, and with this privilege comes great responsibility.

Americans are sometimes deemed "snotty" and "ignorant" by the Europeans. We are not known for our culture, language or cuisine simply because we do not have a

### **PLEASE... USE OUR MONEY**

LILT offers the Friends of FL Award, the Kathleen Ann Lyons Memorial Excellence in Teaching Award, the LILT Stipend (to attend a professional LOTE conference other than LILT), the Lucille Di Pietro Lambert Student Award (\$500 to a graduating senior) and the Teacher Incentive Grant (money for your own LOTE project). Begin thinking now and start the application process at LILT's website: WWW.LILTFL.ORG. The deadline for all the above-mentioned awards is April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

centuries old history to accompany it. It is the job of those who speak other languages to break down these stereotypes of Americans. We must learn about other cultures from their histories to their present predicaments. This way, we can reach across oceans and continents and make friends instead of enemies with people of different cultures. To do this, communication is the key. Of course, the fundamentals of communication start with the study of languages. The logic is simple, yet it is easier said than done. Hopefully, with an increased emphasis on foreign language study in schools and universities, our generation can begin the difficult yet important task of increasing cross-cultural communications.

...My primary academic interests lie in the sciences. I have grown up in a household with two veterinarians, and I love learning about the various aspects of the medical fields. AP Chemistry and AP Biology have been two of my favorite high school courses, and I look forward to continuing their study in college. With hard work and determination, I can hopefully one day go to medical school and become a doctor.

However, there is much more to today's medicine than working in a small office and seeing patients 9-5. The modern world is facing health crises on a global level, from HIV epidemics to parasites caused by unclean drinking water. It will be the job of professionals, educated in both the medical and cultural fields, to apply their knowledge of both subjects to address the health problems the world faces. I hope to be able to utilize my language and medical skills simultaneously when I enter the work force and make a difference in the global issues of health.

#### **SPANISH CST COURSE AT MOLLOY COLLEGE**

Molloy College is offering a Spanish CST Specialty Test Preparation Course (Ed-7500). You may register on line ([www.molloy.edu/ce](http://www.molloy.edu/ce)) or call (516) 678.5000, X6202. The course will be held on 6 Fridays, September 11-October 16, 2009.

#### **LOTE ADVOCACY**

The following is a summary outline of the article: *ATTENTION! Are You Seeking a Position with Excellent Long-Term Benefits? Be an Advocate!* By Mary Ann Redmond, Associate Prof. of Ed., Wake Forest University, Learning Languages, Vol.4, No. 1, 1998. The complete text may be found at: [nnell.org](http://nnell.org).

The author's suggested strategies to promote FLES might also be applied to the secondary level:

1. Take every opportunity to inform parents, administrators, and the local community about the foreign language program and your students' accomplishments.
2. Clarify the nature of the foreign language curriculum and its connectedness to the

elementary classroom.

3. Show parents and the community the skills attained and the purposes for the language learned.
  4. Invite guests to visit your classes to observe the children 'in action'.
  5. Assess students' progress formally and informally and make parents aware of results.
  6. Keep politicians, school board members, and other decision makers informed about your program.
  7. Thank your supporters!
  8. Change the mindset of those who studied a language unsuccessfully.
  9. Network with colleagues and unify efforts in grades K-16.
  10. Establish regular planning sessions with both elementary classroom teachers and K-12 foreign language colleagues.
  11. Use your state conference to organize advocacy efforts.
- Submitted by Nancy Russo-Rumore, Emerita*

#### **LOTE ADVOCACY**

##### **INCREASING LOTE ENROLLMENT**

If your LOTE program begins in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the following suggestion may increase or maintain enrollment. In February, teachers may select several 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to teach 6<sup>th</sup> graders colors and numbers in the target language, to showcase the cultures, and to discuss the importance of studying a foreign language. This should be done before 6<sup>th</sup> graders make their final language choices. For further information about this program, contact Bill Anderson at [wanderson@msd.k12.ny.us](mailto:wanderson@msd.k12.ny.us). *Submitted by Bill Anderson, Massapequa Public Schools*

##### **TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS**

###### **Six Tips to Get Students Focused and Working**

Have your students ever entered the classroom and asked, "What are we going to do today?" Or worse yet, "Are we going to do anything today?" Has a returning student who was absent said, "What did we do yesterday?" Save your teaching voice and establish the following routines to eliminate these questions.

**1. The "Today We Will" List.** Create a list on a whiteboard or flipchart of the day's schedule. List times and activities. For younger students, you might have a morning list and then uncover the afternoon list. Using this list with middle and high school students helps them see what needs to be covered, even if your class is only 50 minutes long. Keeping the list posted also helps you to stick with your lesson plan while still teaching from around the room, as the list is always visible.

**2. The Focus Activity/Question.** When students enter your classroom, they should know that learning will take place. They need to know that there is work to be done immediately. Posting a warm-up or essential question, or a review problem, helps get students settled and thinking about your subject. Some teachers call these *sponges*, as they soak up time while attendance is taken and other administrative duties performed.

**3. The Entrance Table.** If you have several sections of students who come and go from your room, an entrance table is a necessity. Place everything on the table that students will need for that class: workbooks, handouts, etc., and have students learn when they enter your room, to check the entrance table, then get seated to work on the focus activity. Some teachers even put paper, tissues and a can of old pencils on their entrance table.

**4. The Graded Papers Box.** Most elementary teachers have “cubbies” or mailboxes for each student’s papers. When students move from class to class, another system must be employed. Try a large plastic file box, with a file folder for each student. Put dividers for each class, and teach students that when the box is on the entrance table, their papers are graded. They can pick up their papers from their folder, leaving the folder in the box. No time is spent passing out papers! The added bonus for you is that you can grade papers that are already alphabetized, as students put their finished work in their own folders, and folders stay in order. If a student is absent, handouts are placed in this/her folder, and he/she picks them up from the entrance table at the start of the class.

**5. The Assignment Book.** Since space is limited in most classrooms, consider an assignment notebook placed in one location for students to refer to when they return from an absence. In each class session, or each morning or afternoon for elementary classes, one student is responsible to write assignments in the notebook and also to put handouts in the absent students’ folders. Yes, you will have to check the pages, as some students might write “we did nothing,” but most students will be willing to help and just writing the assignments and a few notes will help some students stay focused.

**6. Individualized Attention.** When students know

the routine of entering the room, checking the table, picking up their own papers from folders, and then being seated to read the “today we will” and the focus, there is an order to the process. The best benefit is that if students can do all of this for themselves, the teacher has time to say hello, answer content questions, and give a little individualized attention to students, which is truly what students need. *Phi Delta Kappa International, (www.pdkintl.org)* written by Mary C. Clement, Berry College, Georgia. Submitted by Nancy Russo-Rumore, Emerita.

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETITION SUBMISSION**

- Hold a class competition. Make any or all of the competition topics a class assignment. Submit only the best student work to LILT.
- Plan ahead! Institute your own student/school deadline date *one to two weeks in advance* of the LILT deadline for submission. Please allow enough time to prepare all entries completely & correctly for a timely submission.
- Have a question? Please ask! On the LILT homepage (WWW.LILTFLL.ORG) you will find a person to contact on the Competition Committee who will help to answer your questions before the deadline.
- Check that all entries on VHS tapes/DVDs/CDs have indeed been recorded before submitting.
- Review all paperwork to ensure it is complete before mailing.
- **The LILT competition deadline date is not flexible.** All entries must have a U.S. postmark on or before the due date, even if it is a Saturday or Sunday.
- Plan ahead! Find the location of your nearest post office and the hours of operation *IN ADVANCE*. Save yourself the trouble of driving from one post office to another in search of an open post office.

**Six Tips for Engaging Diversity**

Mark Twain once commented, “*Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it’s time to pause and reflect.*”

Public education is about meeting the needs of all students. And they come from every imaginable background in terms of sex, race, family configuration, religion, culture, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, and other factors. Even in schools where diversity may not be obvious, educators should pay as much attention to the issues as they do in schools where differences among students are highly visible. The following are six tips for engaging diversity:

**1. Embrace The Concept Of Difference.**

Learning occurs when individuals are exposed to the unfamiliar. Students whose backgrounds and life experiences differ from one another are a rich source of sociocultural learning. Exchanging viewpoints, discussing experiences, and sharing aspects of culture, language, and customs are powerful tools for learning about our world and its fascinating inhabitants.

**2. Use Inclusive Language.** Avoid stereotyping sex, race, family configuration, and so on. Secretaries and nurses cannot be assumed to be women, nor should business executives or doctors be assumed to be men. Also, find out about students’ families. Not everyone has a mother and a father. Some students come from single-parent homes, have two dads or two moms, live with a grandmother or other relative, or are in foster care.

**3. Ask Rather Than Assume.** My wife died when my son was three years old. When he was in kindergarten, his

teacher called me to ask whether I thought he would be okay with making a Mother's Day card, even though his mother was dead. I appreciated the call, and, even more, I still cherish the card he made for me. Rather than make an assumption and give my son an alternative assignment, the teacher checked with me. When questions arise, sensitive teachers ask parents or the students themselves, because they recognize that not everyone is alike.

**4. Accommodate Diversity in Appearance.** How students look often provided controversy, whether hairstyles, clothing, or accessories are simply personal choices or expressions of faith. The headscarf (hijab) worn by some Muslim girls, the skull cap (yamulka) sometimes worn by Jewish boys, and temple garments under regular clothing by some Mormons are examples of apparel that are personal expressions of faith. Is banning certain clothing or jewelry necessary to ensure successful schooling, or is it discrimination? Thoughtful educators engage their school's stakeholders in making decisions about appropriate appearance.

**5. Seize Teachable Moments.** Use special observances as times to focus on diverse peoples and cultures. Black History Month (February), Women's History Month (March), Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (May), Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15, and American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month (November) are examples. For more information, consult the National Archives website.

**6. Celebrate Education.** Rather than focus on a specific orthodoxy, use faith-based observances as instances to explore traditions and cultures. How do Christmas celebrations differ in the United States, Germany, and Spain? Is Hanukkah celebrated the same way in Canada and Israel? Where did Kwanza come from? Rather than neutralizing such observances, use them to examine our world and the rich and varied traditions we hold dear, but bear in mind the difference between teaching and preaching. *Phi Delta Kappa International, (www.pdkintl.org), written by Donovan R. Walling. Submitted by Nancy Russo-Rumore, Emerita*

### **SPOTLIGHT ON...**

The editor regrets to note no articles about an outstanding LOTE teacher on Long Island were submitted. Don't you wish to honor an individual who has helped you in your career, or inspired you to be more than you ever thought you could be? The next deadline for *LILT Newsletter* articles is December 1<sup>st</sup>. The editor would love to see his e-mailbox filled with inspirational articles, [RGENTILE@LILTFLL.ORG](mailto:RGENTILE@LILTFLL.ORG). The deadline for the next edition is December 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **USEFUL ITALIAN WEBSITE**

This is an excellent website, which can be used often. Even though it looks as if it were for young children (FLES), it can also be used for the secondary, lower levels: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/languagesonline/italian/italian.htm> Submitted by Maria Catalano, Regional HS, Baldwinville, Mass.

### **CAN LANGUAGE SKILLS WARD OFF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?**

#### **2010 LILT STUDENT FL COMPETITION TOPICS**

**Original Essay:** Growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Language Video Production:** How to Celebrate... (of the target language culture)\*

**Multi-Media Computer Program:** A Virtual Tour of... (famous artwork of the target language culture.)<sup>+</sup>

**ASL:** NEW FOR 2010, poetry and song interpretation competitions.

\*Videos can only be submitted on VHS or DVD. CD's and Flash Drives are not permitted. NEW FOR 2010.

<sup>+</sup>Must be submitted on CD only, playable on Windows. Flash drives are not permitted.

*Members' dues for 2010 must be paid by December 31<sup>st</sup> for students to participate in the 2010 competition.*

**See [LILTFLL.ORG](http://LILTFLL.ORG) for more detailed information.**

Adding to the deep body of research associating mental acuity with a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease, a study published online on July 8 by the journal *Neurology* suggests that people who possess sophisticated linguistic skills early in life may be protected from developing dementia in old age - even when their brains show the physical signs, like lesions and plaques, of memory disorders.

That discrepancy is not unheard of: many elderly patients develop the brain lesions, plaques and tangled neurological-tissue fibers that are indicative of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, but not all of them exhibit the memory loss and confusion that typically characterize these disorders. In fact, the number of such patients may be greater than researchers first thought. In a November 2008 study, a team of scientists used a new positron emission tomography (PET) brain-imaging technique developed by Drs. William Klunk and Chester Mathis of the University of Pittsburgh to image the brains of live patients - a leap forward in a field that long had to rely on postmortem analyses of brain tissue to confirm diagnoses after the fact - and showed that some 21% of patients with physical signs of dementia suffered no outward symptoms of cognitive impairment. (See how to prevent illness at any age.)

The leading theory to explain this fortunate disconnect is the brain-reserve hypothesis, which suggests that people who

have more cognitive ability and more neural tissue to start with - sharper minds, broadly - may be better able to withstand the ravages of age. "In some ways, you could think of it like a trained athlete who might be able to resist some atherosclerosis of the heart," explains Dr. Bradley Hyman, director of the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and a professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School.

Past studies have shown that patients who have so-called asymptomatic Alzheimer's disease - those who have the hallmark brain lesions and plaques of Alzheimer's disease but no memory loss - also have enlarged neurons, compared with patients who suffer cognitive impairment. Dr. Diego Iacono, a neuropathology fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the future director of the Brain Bank at Sweden's Karolinska Institute, conducted several such studies in predominantly male populations, but his latest research, the study published in *Neurology*, demonstrates the same patterns in an entirely female population - of nuns.

The Nun study may not be familiar to most people outside of elite neurology circles, but to dementia researchers, it's a gold mine. The long-term data on more than 600 nuns from Minnesota has revealed a great many insights about the effects of aging and the development of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. And yet it was not in the Nun study's core data that its director, Dr. David Snowdon, first discovered a fascinating correlation between the sisters' language skills, based on essays they had written in their 20s when they first entered the convent (Snowdon discovered the essays in the convent's archives), and the likelihood that they would develop Alzheimer's later in life. The correlation was striking: the young women who had more sophisticated language skills - defined as the density of ideas per every 10 written words - were far less likely to suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia five, six or seven decades later.

Iacono effectively picked up where Snowdon left off. Iacono and his colleagues discovered that not only did nuns who avoided dementia later in life have 20% higher linguistic scores as young women, compared with peers who developed symptoms of cognitive decline, but that the relationship held up even in nuns whose brains showed all the physical signs of Alzheimer's. "There is a special group of people who have comparable amount of plaques and tangles - the typical marks of the disease - without the cognitive impairment," says Iacono. "[It appears that] people with higher linguistic scores were protected even in the face of higher pathology."

The finding adds to a collection of studies suggesting that the greater one's initial mental fitness - measured

variously as higher educational achievement or high IQ, for example - the better it may be safeguarded in old age. "It's broadly consistent with the notion that if someone starts out with the ability, however their brain is organized, to have a greater set of skills in language and performing other complicated tasks, then maybe that brain is more resistant [later in life]," says Harvard's Hyman. (See the top 10 scientific discoveries of 2008.)

How exactly the brain builds up resistance to Alzheimer's is, of course, the central question driving legions of researchers. Are some people's brains capable of building detours around damaged neural circuits? Is there a gene that may help certain people rebuild and repair damaged brain tissue better than others can? Iacono suggests that's a strong possibility, pointing to the presence of one particular gene, APOE2, in 30% of patients with asymptomatic Alzheimer's. The next step in his research, he says, is to understand how this gene works.

What researchers are increasingly discovering is that the human brain may contain much more plasticity than they thought. Understanding how it recovers from injury or compensates for damaged tissue may shed light not only on memory disorders, but also on other conditions, such as Parkinson's or Lou Gehrig's disease, Hyman suggests. "That kind of mental flexibility would be an important component to recovery from any kind of damage."

It is not yet clear whether highly developed language skills actually play a role in fending off Alzheimer's disease or whether the correlation is merely a side effect of other protective processes. Indeed, Iacono's study, which involved 38 nuns, only 14 of whom he had writing samples from, is too small to show a definitive effect. But the way Iacono looks at it, no one knows how much of the risk of dementia is hardwired into our DNA and how much is determined by environmental factors like physical exercise and social activity, so while the jury is still out, brushing up on your Shakespeare certainly can't hurt. *Time.com* (as posted on Yahoo! News), July 11, 2009. Submitted by Aurora O'Brien, Plainedge HS

#### **SOME THOUGHTS ON THE LOST ART OF READING ALOUD**

Sometimes the best way to understand the present is to look at it from the past. Consider audio books. An enormous number of Americans read by listening these days — listening aloud, I call it. The technology for doing so is diverse and widespread, and so are the places people listen to audio books. But from the perspective of a reader in, say, the early 19th century, about the time of Jane Austen, there is something peculiar about it, even lonely.

In those days, literate families and friends read aloud to each other as a matter of habit. Books were still relatively scarce and expensive, and the routine electronic diversions we take for granted were, of course, nonexistent. If you had grown up listening to adults reading to each other regularly, the thought of all of those solitary 21<sup>st</sup>-century individuals harkening to earbuds and car radios would seem isolating.

It would also seem as though they were being trained only to listen to books and not to read aloud from them.

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It's part of a pattern. Instead of making music at home, we listen to recordings of professional musicians. When people talk about the books they've heard, they're often talking about the quality of the readers, who are usually professional. The way we listen to books has been de-socialized, stripped of context, which has the solitary virtue of being extremely convenient.

But listening aloud, valuable as it is, isn't the same as reading aloud. Both require a great deal of attention. Both are good ways to learn something important about the rhythms of language. But

one of the most basic tests of comprehension is to ask someone to read aloud from a book. It reveals far more than whether the reader understands the words. It reveals how far into the words — and the pattern of the words — the reader really sees.

Reading aloud recaptures the physicality of words. To read with your lungs and diaphragm, with your tongue and lips, is very different than reading with your eyes alone. The language becomes a part of the body, which is why there is always a curious tenderness, almost an erotic quality, in those 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century literary scenes where a book is being read aloud in mixed company. The words are not mere words. They are the breath and mind, perhaps even the soul, of the person who is reading.

No one understood this better than Jane Austen. One of the late turning points in "Mansfield Park" comes when Henry Crawford picks up a volume of Shakespeare, "which had the air of being very recently closed," and begins to read aloud to the young Bertrams and their cousin, Fanny Price. Fanny

discovers in Crawford's reading "a variety of excellence beyond what she had ever met with." And yet his ability to do every part "with equal beauty" is a clear sign to us, if not entirely to Fanny, of his superficiality.

I read aloud to my writing students, and when students read aloud to me I notice something odd. They are smart and literate, and most of them had parents who read to them as children. But when students read aloud at first, I notice that they are trying to read the meaning of the words. If the work is their own, they are usually trying to read the intention of the writer.

It's as though they're reading what the words represent rather than the words themselves. What gets lost is the inner voice of the prose, the life of the language. This is reflected in their writing, too, at first.

In one realm — poetry — reading aloud has never really died out. Take Robert Pinsky's new book, *Essential Pleasures: A New Anthology of Poems to Read Aloud*. But I suspect there is no going back. You can easily make the argument that reading silently is an economic artifact, a sign of a new prosperity beginning in the early 19th century and a new cheapness in books. The same argument applies to listening to books on your iPhone. But what I would

suggest is that our idea of reading is incomplete, impoverished, unless we are also taking the time to read aloud. *The New York Times*, May 16, 2009. Submitted by the Editor.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

#### **FROM A GRADUATE STUDENT ABROAD**

Prior to completing my MAT at Stony Brook University in French and starting a career, I decided to improve my language skills and cultural knowledge with an authentic experience in France. Through the language assistantship program run by *l'Education Nationale*, I became an English Language Assistant. For seven months I worked in a French high school alongside native French professors of English in Anglet, Aquitaine, in the beautiful Basque coastal region. My time spent in Anglet became a hands-on way to learn basic aspects of language teaching and cultural transmission. Although there were two official training sessions, I felt the most practical training was in the classroom with the professors and on my own through trial and error. My role was not very academic-based, such as grammar instruction, rather more for culture and for the

#### **ARE YOU UP TO DATE?**

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students to benefit from a native speaker.

The six *professeurs*, who taught almost exclusively in English, had different roles for me. Sometimes I read aloud texts the students were studying, providing them with input from a native speaker. At first, this activity seemed banal to me since I desired interaction and discussion with students, but it proved challenging for the students, no matter what their level. I had to be reminded often, at first, to speak slowly. After a few weeks I got used to the pace the different classes could handle. Another important skill was circumlocution, giving synonyms, antonyms and other phrases to express similar ideas. Sometimes it went both ways as the students and teachers offered me French words and expressions. This was one of my favorite parts because it related directly to what I will have to do during my teaching career. I used English almost exclusively with the students and was encouraged to see that using circumlocution was an effective tool for making myself understood without using French. It was fun seeing the students' faces light up when they comprehended my, at times, funny movements, drawings or explanations.

Another role for me was to correct student errors, either in writing or during one-on-one speaking sessions. If my role reading aloud seemed tedious, this was far worse. I felt this group of students was missing out on the authentic interactions and the cultural knowledge I was there to provide. I didn't enjoy being their grammar book (I don't know the technical intricacies of English as the teachers did!), or dictionary, because that material can be looked up and studied on the student's own time. The students didn't like this arrangement either and some tried asking me questions about life in New York and various American things, which I gladly answered. The one-on-one discussions were not as focused on error correction but more on fluency and confidence with their own language skills. We spoke about their internships, which are a requirement for their diplomas. The internships were at least a month long, working, usually paid, with a company of their choosing in their field of study; for example, heating and air conditioning, or working in an interior designer's office. They worked with mentors and were given a variety of tasks within the company to experience as many aspects as possible. Most students' reactions were very positive, saying it was

much better than classroom learning, and gave a real view of what the working world is like. Some students even did their internships in England or Wales and would like to find work in an English-speaking country. They, of course, were the most motivated of all the students. Other interesting topics of discussion included personal interests and opinions on various things, like the month-long student strikes in December, and President Obama's election.

My most challenging role was to lead half the class at a time in activities for speaking practice. It took a long time to figure out the appropriate skill levels of the students and appropriate topics to discuss. The skill range was so varied within the class. I had to make sure that at least every student produced something authentic during our time together, sometimes I saw the class for only half an hour once a week. The subjects of study were not my preferred topics of conversation, such as architecture, design and engineering. It was interesting seeing classes conducted in

the L2 relating to their area of study. Not at all what the typical high school teacher discusses here! I was impressed with the amount of research the teachers had to do to prepare for those classes. The vocabulary isn't very common, definitely not textbook material, so they mainly used articles from the related industry, all authentic materials. The common themes I settled on were environmental issues, and starting a new job. All the classes studied the environmental theme at some point, so we discussed political

cartoons and debated controversial statements. The "starting a job" topic was a result of all their internship experiences I had heard about, so I provided them with other ideas to expand their stories and reports.

As for the cultural aspect of my role as assistant, I learned more about Americans and Basques than I did about the French. When you are closely surrounded by your own culture, it is hard to detect the things we do differently from others. The Basque country is unique because they are very aware of the differences between their culture, the French and others due to the long struggles they have been through to maintain it. The best learning opportunity I found was through discussing differences. It may sound banal but the most profound observation I learned was how much the geography of the United States has shaped American society. From the variety of terrains within our own country to the layouts of our small towns, all have an effect on how we live. In my teaching, I hope to get my students to understand this, to be able to learn another culture and appreciate their own by exposing them to some of the

### **WINTER WORKSHOPS**

Interested in presenting a Winter Workshop? Contact Michele Ortiz at [MORTIZ@LILTFL.ORG](mailto:MORTIZ@LILTFL.ORG), or complete the Call For Proposals form found on the LILT website ([LILTFL.ORG](http://LILTFL.ORG)) and forward it to Michele.

Workshops can be taught in your own school and are two hours long. LILT is always looking for teachers to share their best ideas and practices. Get involved and share your knowledge with fellow colleagues. This is a fabulous opportunity for professional development.

differences I experienced. I know not many students are able to travel at a young age to France, or other francophone countries, to see these differences in action, so it will be my role to share this information with them.

During my seven months in Anglet I certainly improved my language skills and cultural knowledge of French, and more than I had imagined for my L1. I also learned practical experiences on the basics of language teaching along the way. Armed with a variety of contacts in France, a few suitcases worth of authentic materials and intangible, unforgettable experiences, I have a new perspective on language and culture, and feel prepared to take on, and succeed, during student teaching and beyond. *Submitted by Danielle Wagner, graduate student, Stony Brook University.*

### **A VIRTUAL GAME TO TEACH CHILDREN LANGUAGES**

The star video game developer behind Age of Empires has turned his gaming talents to something new: teaching children languages.

Wiz World Online, developed by 8D World, a start-up based in Shanghai, China, and Woburn, Mass., was built by Rick Goodman, who developed the popular games Age of Empires and Empire Earth. In his latest virtual world, instead of re-enacting historical battles, Chinese children can learn English.

Alex Wang, the company's chief executive and co-founder, said the idea grew out of his personal experience landing at the San Francisco airport on his first visit from China, 21 years ago, when he was in his 20s.

Though he had studied English for years and scored well on the written part of the GRE test, he discovered that he could not read the McDonald's menu in the airport, nor could he converse with the server. Although he was hungry, "I was never in that kind of conversation before, and I ended up with a jumbo Coca-Cola with tons of ice," he recalled.

"Hundreds of millions of people experience the same problem worldwide, particularly in Asia," he said. "People study languages, but cannot talk, cannot communicate."

The biggest problems, he said: children studying languages do not get to practice the language in their daily lives, they do not get much attention from teachers in large classrooms and they are often afraid to make mistakes when they do try to speak different languages.

Those are the problems that Wiz World Online aims to solve. Kids choose an avatar and pick a scene, like a castle in a fantasyland or a supermarket in the United States. They are confronted with challenges, like dodging flying monsters or buying fruit, all of

which ask them to use English. If they hit a ceiling in their language capabilities, they go to the wizards' library and read so-called magical books that teach them lessons.

The company is initially focusing on kids age 7 to 12 in China but plans to expand globally, eventually teaching many different languages to kids all over the world.

Venture capitalists and entrepreneurs are increasingly interested in Web companies that have to do with education, an area they say has not yet been transformed by the Internet.

"The fundamental education business models are coming down," said Alex Finkelstein, a general partner at Spark Capital, which led a \$7 million venture capital round for 8D World.

Only a few years ago, he said, people did not think education could be done on the Web, but companies like Rosetta Stone, a language learning Web company that went public this year, has proven them wrong. "Those are educational products that not only teach people but are becoming very big, profitable companies," he said.

Mr. Goodman and Mr. Wang met at Boston Post Mortem, a group of game developers that meets regularly. They started the company in 2007 but kept its educational purpose a secret. Some bloggers guessed that it would be a massive, multi-player fantasy world. This summer, they unveiled Wiz World Online in Shanghai.

Though China has cracked down on some Internet companies, Mr. Finkelstein called the Chinese government "our best distribution partner." Shanghai public schools are using Wiz World Online in classrooms and in July, the Shanghai government will launch the Wiz World Cup, an oral English competition.

Wiz World Online is free for now as it works out the kinks, but the company plans to charge \$120 to \$150 a year for subscriptions starting in September. Down the road, the company could also make money selling virtual goods or sponsorships to advertisers, Mr. Finkelstein said. *The New York Times, July 16, 2009. Submitted by the Editor.*

### **YIDDISH**

A language is the soul of its people. This is nowhere illustrated more profoundly than in the Yiddish language, the language of Jews of eastern and central Europe and their descendants. A tongue full of wit and charm, Yiddish embodies deep appreciation of human behavior in all its colorful manifestations. The word Yiddish comes from German Judisch meaning Jewish. But it is not the same as Hebrew, even though it is written in Hebrew script.

Here's what Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer had to say about the language in his 1978 Nobel Prize acceptance speech: "Yiddish language - a language of exile, without a land, without frontiers, not supported by any government, a language which possesses no words for weapons, ammunition, military exercises, war tactics... There is a quiet humor in Yiddish and a gratitude for every day of life, every crumb of success, each encounter of life. *Continued*

# PROFESSIONAL CALENDAR

2009

Jun. 7-Sep. 7	<i>Napoléon and Eugénie</i> , Nassau County Museum of Art (516.484.9337)	<b>MAR. 18</b>	<b>LILT-AAT Poster Contest, deadline for submissions. Topic: <i>Languages Connect Us</i></b>
Aug. 28- Sep. 7	<i>Mother Cabrini Italian Feast</i> , Suffolk County Community College, Brentwood (631.499.6824)	Mar. 19	AATI Poetry Contest, SUNY at Old Westbury
Sep. 9-14	<i>Grande Festa Italiana</i> , Hempstead Harbor Beach, Port Washington (516.883.5762)	<b>MAR. 20</b>	<b>Judging for the Student FL Competition</b>
<b>SEP. 16</b>	<b>LILT Fall General Membership Meeting, Holiday Inn, Plainview. Business Meeting at 4 PM, Dinner at 4:30 PM. Go to LILTFL.ORG for details.</b>	Mar. 25	Judging for the Poster Contest
Sep. 18	AATI First Professional Meeting	Mar. 25-27	NECTFL Conference, New York City
Sep. 20	CSJ/AATI, <i>Italian Experience</i> , Hofstra	<b>Mar. 31</b>	<b>Deadline for LILT plaque orders.</b>
Sep. 26, Oct. 3	AATSP SmartBoard Workshop, Jericho HS	Mar. TBA	AATI National Contest,
October	Italian Heritage and Culture Month, celebrating Galileo Galilei and Giuseppe Petrosino, <a href="http://www.italianculturemonth.org">www.italianculturemonth.org</a> .	Mar. TBA	AATSP National Spanish Exam
Oct. 9-11	NYSAFLT Annual Meeting, Buffalo	<b>APRIL</b>	<b>LILT Winter Workshops end</b>
Oct. 11	AATI, Columbus Day Parade, Huntington	<b>APR. 15</b>	<b>Deadline for LILT Award, Grant and Stipend applications. Go to LILTFL.ORG for details.</b>
Oct. 12	AATI, Columbus Day Parade, NYC	Apr. TBA	AATI Third Professional Meeting
Oct. 14	AATSP Checkpoint C Workshop, Jericho HS	May 15	AATI Dante Award and Scholarship Luncheon, Pompei Restaurant, West Hempstead
Oct. 23/24	AATI, NIAF Conference, Washington DC	<b>MAY TBA</b>	<b>LILT Spring General Membership Meeting, Suffolk County</b>
Oct. 30-Nov. 1	ASLTA Conference, San Diego, Dr. Carol Padden, Keynote Speaker (Go to <a href="http://aslta.org">aslta.org</a> for details.)	Jun. TBA	AATSP <i>Entrega de Premios</i>
Nov. 2	AATSP Day of the Dead Workshop, Baldwin HS	<b>YIDDISH (continued)</b>	
<b>NOV. 14</b>	<b>LILT Regional, Bay Shore MS. Go to LILTFL.ORG for details.</b>	The Yiddish mentality is not haughty. It does not take victory for granted. It does not demand and command but it muddles through, sneaks by, smuggles itself amidst the powers of destruction, knowing somewhere that God's plan for Creation is still at the very beginning... In a figurative way, Yiddish is the wise and humble language of us all, the idiom of frightened and hopeful Humanity." <i>Reprinted from Wordsmith.org, March 24, 2008. Submitted by the Editor.</i>	
Nov. 19	AATSP Proficiency Prep. Workshop, Berner MS	<b>FOOD FOR THOUGHT</b>	
Nov. 20-22	ACTFL, AATG and AATI Conventions and World Languages Expo., San Diego	<i>The budget should be balanced, the treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt, the mobs should be forced to work and not depend on government for subsistence. Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106 BC - 43 BC, Roman philosopher, statesman, lawyer, political theorist and Roman constitutionalist.</i>	
Nov. 21	AATSP Power Point/Internet Workshop, Locust Valley MS/HS	<i>Men ever had, and ever will have leave, To coin new words well suited to the age, Words are like Leaves, some wither every year, And every year a younger Race succeeds.</i>	
Dec. 4	AATI <i>Festa Natalizia</i> , Jericho HS	Quintus Horatius Flaccus, known in the English-speaking world as Horace (65-8 BC), poet and satirist.	
<b>DEC. 31</b>	<b>Last day to pay for 2010 LILT memberships to participate in The Student FL Competitions</b>	<b>Thank You to Adrienne Greenbaum, Nancy Russo-Rumore and Ron Taub for proofreading this edition.</b>	
<b>2010</b>			
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>LILT Winter Workshops begin. Go to LILTFL.ORG for details.</b>		
Feb. 5	AATSP Deadline for Victor Baptiste Essay Contest		
Feb. TBA	AATI Second Professional Meeting		
<b>MAR. 1</b>	<b>Deadline for LILT Student Foreign Language Competition submissions. Go to LILTFL.ORG for all details.</b>		
Mar. 8-14	Foreign Language Week		



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