



They Make the Conference Happen

By Paula Hirsch and Lorraine D'Ambruoso

Carol Sparks

Many CLTA Conference participants look forward to not only the superb sessions and workshops but also to the exhibitors. For some teachers, the exhibitors are a major reason for attending a conference. Without Carol Sparks, the CLTA Exhibits Chair, we would have no exhibitors. She is our link behind the scenes with the publishers and vendors. Every August for more than 15 years, Carol has worked with the Conference Coordinator and our decorator to set up the floor plan for the exhibitors. She then contacts publishers from all over California and the US. She also checks to see if there are local vendors of jewelry or realia who would like to exhibit. This in itself sounds like a tremendous amount of work, but there is more. Carol is in constant contact with the companies who exhibit at the conference asking them how she can make their experience better. (Until last year, Carol also solicited ads for the Conference Program and sent them to the Program Chair.) Once the conference begins, Carol remains in the Exhibit Hall, overseeing, troubleshooting, and awarding door prizes.

Besides doing all of this for the state conference, Carol also has presented at many conferences and until her retirement several years ago, also taught Spanish full-time at a middle school in northern California. In addition to mentoring student teachers and working with the East Bay Foreign Language Project, Carol was the first recipient of the Hal Wingard Lifetime Achievement Award. CLTA is fortunate to have a colleague who gives so much to the profession in her retirement.

Alice Bell

Since 2002, Alice Bell has been CLTA's Program Chair. Setting up a program that makes sure that there are language-specific as well as general presentations

in all time slots is a herculean job, but Alice Bell does this and much more as the CLTA Program Chair. She works with the Conference Coordinator as well as the Advertising Chair, the Exhibits Chair and the hotel to set up the program. She reads the comments and evaluations made by the teachers who have attended the sessions and workshops and tries to take these suggestions into account as she plans future programs. It is Alice who works with the printers in the north and the south in order to insure that the program is perfect! She monitors changes and makes sure that, before the conference, there is a summary of program changes printed for all participants.

Early on in the process, Alice visits the hotel so that she knows what the rooms look like so that she can carefully place sessions and workshops into the appropriate rooms. Before Alice puts the final program together, she schedules all workshops and collects articles and registration materials from the Registrar, Conference Coordinator and Local Committee and puts together the Conference Newsletter that is sent to all CLTA members. When she finishes the newsletter, she begins to schedule the interest sessions and sends that schedule to the Webmaster so that he can put the workshops, interest sessions and registration materials on line. When all of these tasks are completed, Alice begins to input the data and the ads into the program. During the conference, Alice makes sure to visit as many presentations as possible in order to insure that there are no major problems for presenters Alice's hand touches in some way every aspect of the Conference. CLTA could not have as successful a conference without the work of Alice Bell.

A retired teacher of French, Alice has been active in many of the professional development activities offered in the state. In 2003, she was honored with a

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

CLTA Outstanding Teacher Award. She currently keeps busy traveling, usually to France, and of course she will continue to serve CLTA and the profession as our Program Chair.

Many thanks - Gracias and Merci to these two wonderful ladies.

If You Are Reading This...

...you are probably already a 2009 CLTA member. *Language* magazine is sent to all of our current members as a service of our organization. But perhaps you are reading a colleague's copy or a copy left in the faculty lounge. Keep reading to see how you can start receiving your own copy...and all the other advantages of CLTA membership.

With the 2009-2010 school year well underway, CLTA and its affiliates are busy planning activities for the coming year. In addition to CLTA's annual conference to be held in San Diego from March 10 – 14, 2010, and a full schedule of workshops and meetings planned by our affiliates, California language teachers have another professional opportunity to be held in our state this year—the annual conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), our national organization. This conference will be held in San Diego from Thursday, November 19 to Sunday, November 22, 2009. It has been many years since ACTFL's annual conference was held in California, so we hope many of you will take advantage of this year's proximity and attend. Current ACTFL or current CLTA members receive a very substantial reduction in conference fees.

It is also not too early to think about applying for one of CLTA's many summer travel and study awards. In 2009, ten government grants were awarded to our members as well as seven monetary Lang-A-Broad grants to offset travel costs. A requirement for all CLTA grants and awards

is a minimum of two consecutive years of CLTA membership, including the year in which the grant or award is given. If this magazine is addressed to you, it means you are a current 2009 member so you only need to pay 2010 dues to be eligible to apply.

If you are reading a colleague's copy of this newsletter, it is not too late to join for 2009. 2009 dues are accepted up to December 31, 2009 (be sure to specify you want the dues applied to 2009 and not 2010). You can also pay your 2009 and 2010 dues at one time with one check and you will then be eligible to apply for all those grants and awards. Also, if you are attending the ACTFL Conference in November, you can still join CLTA for 2009—and receive the discounted registration fees.

Current CLTA members will receive 2010 renewal forms in November. Dues remain unchanged at \$50 annually. If you want to take care of these dues now, visit us at www.clta.net and download the application. While you are on our website, take time to see all the information and services available to our members. Would you like to find out everything that is going on in the state in the language education field? Then be sure to sign up for our e-mail list while you are on the website! Get connected to your colleagues all over the state and nation with CLTA membership!

Questions on membership???? Email CLTA's membership chair, Marge Sotomayor, mjsotomayor@suddenlink.net

Here's a quote that might help us as we attempt to weather the storm imposed on Education by the financial morass we are currently experiencing:

*“Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass....
It's about learning how to dance in the rain”*

Ten CLTA Members Enjoy Foreign Study Grants

By Lewis Johnson, CLTA Awards Chair

Each year, CLTA coordinates the awarding of ten grants to study abroad. They are sponsored by various agencies, including the French Government for study in France (2), the Goethe Institut for study in Germany, the Spanish Embassy for study in Spain, the Quebec Government for study in Quebec, the Japan Foundation for study in Japan, the Spanish Language Institute for study in Cuernavaca, Mexico, the Italian Government for study in Perugia, Italy, and a University of Venice Grant for study in Venice. In addition, CLTA offers a Memorial Scholarship for members who design their own travel and/or study abroad programs.

Most of these grants have only 1 or 2 applicants, and some years there are no qualified applicants for some of the grants. Free summer study abroad and few teachers apply! Why is that? 1) The application deadline comes at a very inconvenient time, right after Christmas vacation. 2) The application requires two consecutive years of CLTA membership

You can study abroad for free next summer. 1) Plan ahead. 2) Watch for the announcement of the summer, 2010 grants. 3) Renew your membership in CLTA every year. 4) Information and applications for 2010 grants should be available on the CLTA site by Oct. 1. You can find them at <http://www.clta.net/awards/>.

The details of each grant differ greatly. They often include several weeks of study, tuition, room and board, supplies, activities, and tours. The study abroad grants do not include transportation to the study sites. However, CLTA offers LangAbroad scholarships to help defray the expense of airfare.

We invite you to apply this year.

My summer in the world's most enchanting city

By Aned Muñiz

My infatuation with the city of Venice could be considered the longest love affair in my life. It began when I first arrived by train at age 16, not knowing much about what to expect, but feeling immediately drawn to its waterways, arched windows, and absence of cars. It probably helped that I dislike cars and have always been fascinated by water, but the city proved it earned its reputation rightly.

This summer I arrived in Venice the Friday before classes began, and was promptly taken to my temporary Venice residence at Calle dei Guardiani. A doctoral student and young author from the Università dell'Aquila was in the adjacent room, and we shared the kitchen and bathroom until she left a week later. The first days I spent just walking around and having Sabrina share her impressions of the city with me. I still got lost on my way to class the first morning and missed my classmates' introductions, but I got to meet and talk with everybody during our first coffee break. I loved the frequent Italian breaks, which provided ample time for talking and getting to know my Italian and Venetian classmates. As Venice residents themselves will attest, knowing this city and its treasures might take a lifetime. But living and studying among Italians and Venetians certainly helps.

I must admit that I was already familiar with most of the topics discussed in the course, but that might be because I wrote a master's thesis on language teaching methodologies for which I researched the neuropsychological process of language learning and several once innovative approaches to teaching like "suggestopedia," accelerated learning and

constructivist learning. Most of us already employed in the teaching of foreign languages are already familiar with those and many other techniques as well as Gardner's and other theories, but this course succeeded in providing what I appreciated as an intensive, well planned and organized review of the theory supporting language acquisition and pedagogy. An added bonus was that it was entirely in Italian, and specifically geared towards well-educated native speakers of the language.

I was the only foreigner the first week and only one of 3 foreign students during the entire course, the others being from Spain and Slovenia. Italians living in Paris and Amsterdam also joined us, although the contributions I valued the most were those of the three Venetians, who shared restaurant and day trip ideas, organized outings and provided local flavor to our experience. Had it not been for a Venetian, I would have probably missed out on Burano and Torcello, because having visited Murano and a few other spots years ago I mistakenly assumed that I had been to the other major islands as well. Burano was a cheerful explosion of color and merry rows of houses that were impossible to look at without a smile. Torcello was a more classical, sober, brick and marble historical treasure and a trip back in time (even in timeless Venice) that inspired awe and contemplation. This was our lunch spot, where I enjoyed a typical Italian orgy of food that lasted over 2 hours. On the trip back I spent a few seconds at the captain's seat piloting the *vaporetto* and a quick stop back in Burano provided for a warm, friendly chat with a local res-

Continued on back page

CLTA News

P.O. Box 123, Ferndale, CA 95536
Return Service Requested

Continued from page 3

restaurant owner. These are small but memorable pleasures that a typical tourist might overlook but I immensely enjoyed thanks to one of our local guides.

I remember more touristy trips to Venice, drinking Bellinis at Harry's Bar and carousing around during Carnival time. But this last trip, where I focused on living like a Venetian (or as much as a Puerto Rican chameleon could get away with), was my most memorable yet.

I definitely had a memorable summer, one that exemplifies the satisfaction that can be extracted from study and work. It began with my flight to Puerto Rico on the evening after my last final exam at home, and continued with the grading of AP Spanish exams in Cincinnati soon after. Then it took me to Venice, the most enchanting city in the world, thanks to a scholarship offered by the Laboratorio ITALS of the University of Venice (<http://www.scuola-formazioneitals.it/>) and a partial LangAbroad grant of the CLTA. I was also able to attend my Austrian sister's fairy tale wedding over a long weekend in Carinthia. And as if that were not enough, I then led two international student volunteer projects by the aptly named ISV (isvonline.org) in

the Dominican Republic, where our lack of electricity and phone/internet ensured we fully integrated ourselves in our new roles as builders and educators.



Study Grant Winner, Aned Muñiz