

## The President's Letter

Welcome to 2014!

Plans for the ILA convention are well underway. If you haven't already registered for the convention, please do so soon! Early registration helps us plan for rooms, meals, and other convention activities. You can find registration and hotel information available on the ILA website ([www.listen.org](http://www.listen.org)).

Whether attending the convention or not, please support our student attendees. You can make cash contributions, or, if attending the convention, you choose to bring irresistible goods to entice high bids at the Silent Auction!

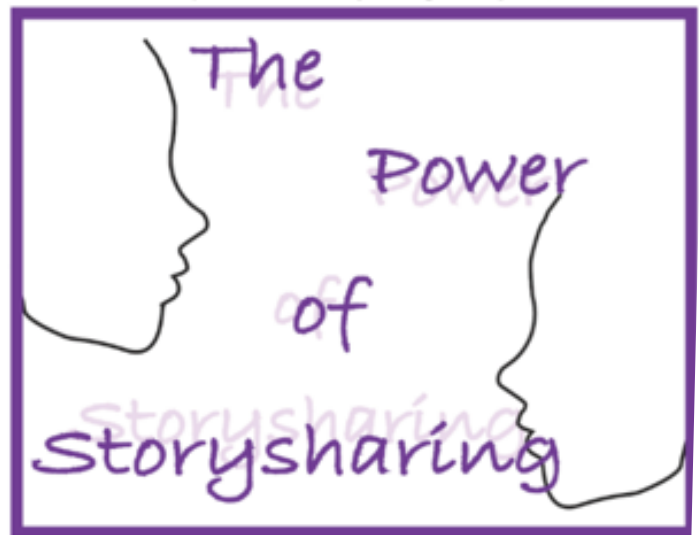
As I noted in my last letter, one Board mandate emerging from our 2013 convention addressed online voting for constitutional amendments and for officer elections. The task force, which was composed of several ILA Board members, has completed the initial draft of the amendment. Phil Tirpack, our 1st Vice President-Elect, will be hosting a series of "Listening Moments." These moments provide you with the opportunity to actively discuss the proposal. You can also contact Phil via email at [ptirpak@verizon.net](mailto:ptirpak@verizon.net). Please actively contribute to this conversation! We want every perspective to be considered. Again, I urge you to lend your voice to this discussion.

Finally, I wish you the very best in your professional and personal life as the New Year begins with hope and promise. My New Year's resolution? To rededicate myself to being the best listener I can be.

See you at the convention!



International Listening Association  
Annual Convention



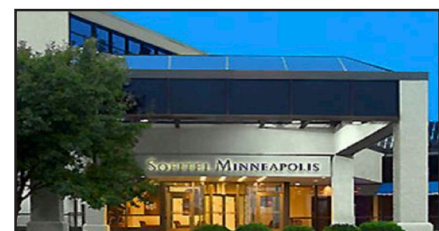
March 27th-29th, 2014

By Pam Cooper

The 2014 convention is only weeks away! I hope you have registered for the convention as well as finalized your travel and hotel arrangements (Both convention registration and hotel registration are open on our ILA site.). Minneapolis promises to be a great convention! Over 50 submissions were received! The programs accepted include traditional paper/panels, workshops, symposia, critical conversations/dialogues, and performances. We will also have a story sharing booth where you can share your stories of ILA, as well as stories of your own listening experiences. We will meet Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with the traditional Convention Kick-Off Reception on Thursday evening.

We will meet in the Midwest for the first time since 2005 at the Sheraton Bloomington (formerly the Hotel Sofitel). The hotel is off of I-494, with a number of restaurants within easy walking distance and a city bus stop on the same block. It's less than three miles to the posh Galleria shopping center, home to big-name designers. Hard-core shoppers will want to make the 10-minute drive to Mall of America — a mall so big, it houses an aquarium and the world's largest indoor theme park, Nickelodeon Universe. It's nine miles to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. The hotel has a shuttle.

The preliminary convention program will be posted on the ILA site in the very near future. I look forward to story sharing with you in Minneapolis March 27-29, 2014.





## Moving to the Future— Online Voting

by Phil Tirpak

At the 2013 convention in Montreal the Executive Board was tasked to develop and refine a process of Online Voting. After much study and discussion that focused on the merits, challenges, and benefits the Board will be presenting a Constitutional Amendment at the 2014 Convention in Minneapolis for Online Voting. Online voting will offer all ILA members the opportunity to be heard, informed, and cast their vote even if they are unable to attend the annual convention. Be on the lookout for a blast with the information on the proposed constitutional amendment. Additionally, the Executive Board will be conducting information sessions through “Go To Meeting” so you have the opportunity to ask and have your questions answered. There will be multiple information sessions to provide the maximum opportunity for all of our members across the globe to call in. Questions about the information sessions can be sent to Phil Tirpak, 1st Vice-President

## It’s not too early to think about 2015!

by Phil Tirpak

With the 2014 convention in Minneapolis on the horizon it’s not too early to begin thinking about and planning for the 36th annual convention and help celebrate the beginning of the next era of the International Listening Association.

First vice-president elect and 2015 convention planner Phil Tirpak has been hard at work even before we adjourned in Montreal to put together an exciting, informative, and enjoyable program and experience. This will include the unveiling of a listening quilt that is being created by master quilter Sharon Tindall that you can be a part of, (see the article on the underground railroad quilt codes.)

Save the dates, March 26 – 29, 2015. Phil is planning some surprises to follow-up with the outstanding program that Pam Cooper has put together for our 2014 Convention in Minneapolis. Be prepared to hear the story!



## Underground Railroad Quilt Codes: Fact or Fiction?

by Phil Tirpak

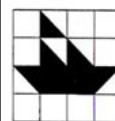
The Underground Railroad was about much more than exotic hiding places and mysterious codes. The real history is rooted in people who made the Underground Railroad work to help move slaves from place to place in their quest for freedom. Listening played an essential role through the recognition and understanding of the Quilt Codes. Master Quilter Sharon Tindall will be joining us at the 2014 ILA Convention in Minneapolis to share the story and oral history of the Underground Railroad Quilt Codes. Ms. Tindall asks the question, are the Quilt Codes fact or fiction? You will have the opportunity to listen to the story and decide.



To continue the story Ms. Tindall will begin creating a Listening Quilt to be unveiled at the 2015 Convention and you can participate in the creation of the Listening Quilt. Join in by bringing a ¼ yard of 100% cotton fabric along with a card with your name, affiliation, and state and place it in a clear plastic bag, (a Baggie, Zip-Lock, or similar). Be part of this exciting year-long project! If you have any questions please email Ms. Tindall: [stindall@nvcc.edu](mailto:stindall@nvcc.edu).

### Adapted from Ozella’s “Secondary Code Patterns”

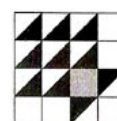
*Hidden in Plain View*



sailboat



britches



basket



nine basket



flying geese



monkey wrench



carpenter's wheel



wagon wheel variation

## **ILA Has An Awesome Responsibility**

by Peter deLisser

How different would our world be if everyone were skilled at Listening?

Can you picture the quality of relationships if everyone gets married? Had to present a Certificate of Listening Proficiency before a license was issued?

What would classrooms be like if every teacher in public schools was required to be a Certified Listener?

How about if every business leader was required to be a Certified Listener before promotion to senior responsibility.

When it comes to skilled listeners, Will Rogers had it right when he said, "the trouble with people is not what they know but what they know that ain't so". I ask two questions in each Teambuilding/ Communication workshop conduct.

Question 1) How effective are you as a listener on a scale between 0 and 100%? The majority of respondents rate themselves around 65% effective.

Question 2) How many of you have ever had a two hour skill practice course in listening?

The response is routinely between 5 and 10%.

**90% of people rate themselves 65% effective with skill only 5% have practiced! that is frightening!**

ILA has an awesome responsibility – to develop a standardized, certified practice course in listening--- one which colleges, schools, business organizations could purchase so across the country the percentage of skilled listeners would dramatically increase-as would the quality of education and relationships.

Peter Delisser  
president/owner

responsible communications

Author- "Be your own Executive Coach-  
Master High Impact Communication Skills"

### **Reminder About Good Search**

**ILA members please Goodsearch for your online searching. If ILA members use GoodSearch , the organization receives a penny a search. Plus, feedback about other ways for earning money are listed on the website.**



## **New Member Experiences**

by Amber Alsop-Kimmel

As a new member to the ILA, I was not sure what to expect from the conference. I was slightly nervous. It was my first ILA conference and I was doing my first panel presentation. After all, I did not know what to expect.

After attending the workshops, presenting my workshop, and meeting new people, I realized that the ILA is where I was meant to be. I really did enjoy myself and am glad I attended. I met several people who I still keep in contact with. One thing I really liked about this conference is that the members do exactly what the organization stands for-they listen. It was nice to have a group of individuals listen to my presentation, understand my work, and provide me feedback that could improve my research capabilities. After I attended the ILA conference, I was then recruited for a Human Resource position. During my interview, I was asked how the information I learned at the ILA conference could help me as a Human Resource Manager. Needless to say, my reasons I gave them are proving to be true. Being in HR, I find myself listening a lot! Not only am I listening a lot, but also I find that when you listen to an individual, the more likely they are to work with you and improve their work habits.

With that being said, the ILA has made an impact on my life since the conference. Not only have I learned a lot, I have learned how to be a better listener (which is something I struggled with)

I am looking forward to the ILA conference in March and to seeing everyone again.

### **Richard D. Halley Says....**

**"CLP Applications for 2014-15 are now on line at Listen.org."**

### **ILA Memories....By Diana Schnapp**

Recently after being in business for around a century, the Benjamin Ranch in Kansas City closed its doors forever and auctioned off all of the equipment. "What does this have to do with ILA?" you ask. In 1998 ILA met for its annual convention in Kansas City. On Thursday evening, the snow was flying when the convention delegates climbed aboard buses and rode to the Benjamin Ranch for a BBQ dinner. They didn't realize until they ate that the after dinner entertainment was provided by the attendees. Imagine if you will the top scholars of listening from throughout the world being challenged to rope a rolling wooden bull from a mechanical horse! Tom Hickerson and Diana Corley Schnapp were among those giving the lariat a twirl—to no avail. Then the real fun began as every ILA member present, including those with walking canes, took to the floor to do the Hokey Pokey and the chicken dance. Sheila Bentley and Francis Grant do a mean "wing" shake. Were you among those shaking your tail feathers that night? As I watched the dancing, I thought how much this said about ILA members. They are as ready to make themselves look silly in the name of fun and fellowship with one another as they are to research, discuss, teach, and train in all aspects of listening. What memories of ILA events do you have?



## INTRODUCING A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH ILLINOIS SKILLS USA

BY Susan Timm

At the annual business meeting that was held during the convention in Montreal this past June, an idea was shared for an exciting new partnership with Skills USA. ILA President Debra Worthington appointed Susan Timm as chair of an Ad-Hoc Committee aimed at exploring the feasibility of a new state-only contest in effective listening.

About seven years ago, Susan became involved with Skills USA through the community college at which she teaches. Skills USA is a national nonprofit organization serving teachers and high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations, including early childhood and health occupations. Some of you might know this organization by its former name: VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America). Almost immediately, Susan saw the possibility of a connection with the ILA.

Since the Skills USA National Leadership Conference and Skills USA Championships are held each June in Kansas City, one year, Susan invited then ILA President, Laura Janusik, also from Kansas City, to join her at the Convention Center to learn more about Skills USA and to discuss the feasibility of a possible partnership. Like Susan, Laura was excited about the possibilities.

A visit to [www.skillsusa.org](http://www.skillsusa.org) will allow you to learn more about Skills USA. See the textbox insert to read some key facts taken from the website (11/11/13).

This past April after the Illinois State Leadership Conference and Championships, Susan talked at length with the Illinois State Executive Director Don Bauc about partnering with ILA regarding a new contest that deals with listening. Don was thrilled with the idea and promised to bring the idea to the Illinois Skills USA Executive Board. When he did, everyone was really excited about the idea of a new listening contest.

Because the Illinois Skills USA was so receptive, we decided to start with this state. Once we are able to fine-tune the event, we can move it forward to other states. Once ten states have adopted the new contest, it qualifies for national competition. Ultimately, it can become a world-wide event at WorldSkills (<http://www.worldskills.org/>)! As you can see, this partnership has great potential to help the ILA achieve its purpose of advancing the practice, teaching, and research of listening throughout the world.

Illinois Association of Skills USA ([www.illinoisskillsua.org](http://www.illinoisskillsua.org)) is one of the founding states of the national organization. This year, both the National and Illinois Skills USA celebrate 50 years of service, so obviously they are well-established. Illinois Skills USA has approximately 3,500 members in over 125 chapters throughout the State.



**Membership:** More than 300,000 students and advisors join Skills USA annually, organized into more than 17,000 sections and 52 state and territorial associations. Combining alumni and lifetime membership, the total number impacted this year is more than 335,000. Skills USA has served more than 11.2 million members since its founding in 1965.

**Mission:** Skills USA's mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens. Skills USA is an applied method of instruction for preparing America's high performance workers in public career and technical programs. It provides quality education experiences for students in leadership, teamwork, citizenship, and character development. It builds and reinforces self-confidence, work attitudes, and communications skills. It emphasizes total quality at work—high ethical standards, superior work skills, life-long education, and pride in the dignity of work.

**Partners:** In 2013, more than 16,000 teachers and school administrators served as professional Skills USA members and advisors. More than 1,100 business, industry and labor sponsors actively support Skills USA at the national level through financial aid, in-kind contributions, and involvement of their people in Skills USA activities. Many more work directly with state associations and local chapters.

**Programs:** Skills USA programs include local, state and national competitions in which students demonstrate occupational and leadership skills. At the annual national-level Skills USA Championships, over 5,900 students compete in 98 occupational and leadership skill areas.

**Skills** championships are held on two levels, high school and college/postsecondary. A group of contests are state only, and others are both state and national. State only contests include several categories such as: Action Skills; Leadership; Skilled and Technical Sciences; and, Occupationally Related.

### The ILA's Effective Listening contest is in the Leadership category.

What sold the Illinois Skills USA Board and ultimately both the students and their advisors on a listening contest is the fact that regardless of the line of work, effective listening is one of the required competencies for success.

At the 2013 Illinois State Fall Leadership Development Conference held November 1-2, Susan Timm shared the new Effective Listening contest with those in attendance. Susan told them that a quick search finds numerous references to the importance of listening for career and technical areas from health-care providers, firefighters, and police officers to chefs and early childhood teaching assistants to HVAC-R technicians and other service providers.



*During the Illinois Skills USA 2013 Fall Leadership Development Conference, over 100 students and their advisors listened intently as they learned about a new state only contest on Effective Listening.*

The Electronics Technicians Association (ETA International) is a strong supporter of SkillsUSA. In its Customer Service Specialist (CSS) competency requirements, listening is one of the major categories of knowledge and skills needed to prepare for the certification; thus, this skill is vital for customer service professionals in any given career field. For example, auto mechanics begin to diagnose a problem by listening to the vehicle's owner describe the issues.

Salary.com for Business shares that one of the job responsibilities of tire technicians is to interact "with customers to understand their needs, solve tire-related problems and offer maintenance recommendations to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty." Basically what this description is saying is that the Tire Technician needs to know how to listen.

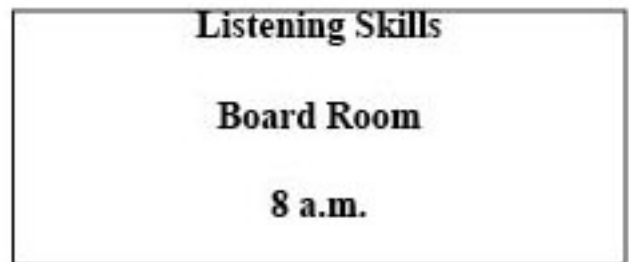
Industrial Robotics Technology/Technician training framework lists two areas of listening as being important competencies: "Applies a variety of listening strategies to accommodate the listening situation," and "applies a variety of listening and observation skills/strategies to recall and interpret information".

In an applied research project entitled "Listening and Leadership: A study on Their Relationship" submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the Executive Fire Officer program, Battalion Chief Gregory L. Rynders stated that "the results indicate that there is a positive relationship between effective leadership and effective listening skills." Bloomberg Businessweek published an article by Carmine Gallo entitled "Why Leadership Means Listening" in which the author states "Over the past several weeks, I interviewed a half-dozen well-known business leaders for a new book on communications. One theme came up repeatedly—great leaders are great listeners."



*Jan, a Criminal Justice teacher, (far left) at an area vocational center was assigned to assist with the new listening contest that debuted at the Illinois SkillsUSA Fall Leadership Development Conference. ILA and SkillsUSA member Susan Timm (far right) coordinated the event. Chuck (center) assisted.*

Of course, those of us in the ILA already know these things. And although The Skills USA advisors, who are both teachers and administrators, really knew these things, they had not stopped to think about the importance of listening as a leadership skill to be developed in Skills USA. Advisors and students alike loved the idea of the new contest. A vice-principal of an area high school commented that this new contest fits right into the new national standards, which will help them when they have to complete their State reports and will add to their justification for spending on Skills USA.



*Sign outside the Board Room where the mini-test for the listening contest was held*

Indeed, the contest was organized around the National Common Core for students in Grades 11-12 who are college and career ready in speaking, listening, and language as well as for college students in career and technical programs of study.

The listening contest was created by Susan with the assistance of Bruce Bloom, Aida Milbergs, and Valerie Repasky. A draft of the contest was sent to various members of both the ILA and Illinois Skills USA boards and to ILA Founder Manny Steil for feedback.

After “selling” the new competition on Friday, November 1, five students agreed to partake in a mini test on Saturday, November 2 so that we could experiment with the format and get direct feedback from participants. By having these five students experience this new event at the Fall Leadership Development Conference, they were able to assist planners with seeing how our ideas work before State competition. With just some minor tweaking, the contest will be ready to roll at the state conference in Springfield, Illinois, this next April.

The advisor assigned to assist with the Listening contest provided some valuable feedback after each of the five students completed their competition. Jan is a criminal justice teacher at an area vocational school. She is absolutely thrilled with the new event and hopes to get several of her students signed up for the State competition in April. As a former police officer, she sees the value of effective listening in the criminal justice field.

Because of the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the students and their advisors, the Illinois Skills USA Director decided that we’d better run the event twice, once in the morning and once again in the late afternoon to accommodate the number of students who might sign up for this event. We won’t know anything for sure until registration ends sometime in March. We should have a good idea by the time we meet in Minnesota for the ILA’s 35th Annual Convention.

Those on the Ad-Hoc Committee are excited to share what they have done to date and to get your feedback when we meet at the next listening convention. The Illinois SkillsUSA Executive Director and the entire Illinois Skills USA Executive Board are thrilled to be entering into this thrilling partnership with the ILA. We too should be thrilled. With this endeavor, we are taking a giant step towards fulfilling our vision to be the international leader of listening practices, teaching and research as we get the opportunity to tell many more people about both the ILA and the importance of effective listening.

See you in Minneapolis!

*Five students from across the State of Illinois agreed to be the first ones to try the new listening contest. Thanks to them, we will be better prepared for the contest’s official start at the State competition in April 2014.*



Listening  
=  
Learning

## **ILA Mission and Vision**

The Purpose of the Association is to advance the practice, teaching, and research of listening throughout the world.

The purpose of the Association will be accomplished in the following ways:

1. The Association will establish a network of professionals committed to promoting the study and development of effective listening.
2. Members will exchange information by sharing teaching objectives, learning activities, promotional methods, materials and additional professional experiences.
3. Members are encouraged to pursue listening research as listening affects humanity on multiple levels of economic, educational, racial, cultural, and international relations.
4. Members will pursue management strategies and efforts promoting effective listening in government and business.

The Vision of the Association is to be the international leader of listening practices, teaching and research.

## **Listening Quotations**

She put the shell against her ear.  
Then rising from her knee,  
She closed her eyes, and, pressing hard,  
She listened for the sea.

I knew she heard the water roar;  
She glowed with childish pride.  
To hold the ocean in her hand  
Was more than she could hide.

She ran across the sand to me;  
I listened for awhile  
Then tucked the shell within her hand  
And nodded with a smile.

I thought that she could learn from me,  
But who am I to tell?  
She brought the ocean home today;  
I only brought a shell.

— Darrell T. Hare

Talk less--you will automatically learn more, hear more, see more--and make fewer blunders. — Mark McCormack

If in all our practices of life we could learn to listen . . . if we could grasp what the other persons are saying as they themselves understand what they are saying, the major hostilities of life would disappear for the simplest reason that misunderstanding would disappear. — Harry Overstreet

Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance. — Proverbs 1:5