

Presidential Reflections

Charles Veenstra

The 38th annual convention of the International Listening Association is now history. The theme, "Listening for Healing," was well-received with sessions on the topic in several areas, but particularly in healthcare where the presenters dealt with how listening helps the physical, emotional, and mental needs of people.

Although I gave a little speech on the importance of the theme, we did not have a keynote speaker this year. Instead, we used the money to show a film entitled "The Listeners." This film, made by Professor Robert Hurst from the University of Kansas describes the training of students who then volunteer to staff crisis lines (check it out at <http://listenersmovie.com>). Following the viewing of the film, two of the trainers were present to discuss their roles and answer questions.

The business meeting was handled very well by our president, Kent Zimmerman. However, he was not quite sure what to do when a suspect was chased into the room by undercover police who then tackled him. Some of us thought it was a role play, but it was not. That was the only exciting thing about the business meeting. I think that one of the reasons the business meeting went so smoothly—in addition to the president's capable leadership—is that Nan Johnson-Curiskis, our executive director, keeps a very close eye on finances.

The weather was great which allowed people to walk to many attractions near the hotel: the Old Market, the Bob Kerry walking bridge over the Missouri River, the sculptures of the pioneers, the Joslyn Art Museum, and many more. Friday afternoon involved no sessions so participants were free to explore Omaha. Several commented to us that they were surprised that Omaha had so much to offer. The Henry Doorly Zoo, which is ranked the highest in the world, is well-known but it takes more than an afternoon to explore it.

Two unexpected challenges faced the planners this year. First, our executive director could not be present because of health reasons. However, it was exciting to see so many members immediately step up and volunteer to help with anything. The members of ILA are truly wonderful people. A special note of thanks simply must go to Melissa Beall. She has much experience in running conventions and we found her extremely helpful.

Second, numbers were lower than expected. We are not sure if this is because we scheduled the convention for June rather than March. While Omaha is centrally located, it may be that people were not fully aware of what this city had to offer. We have to guarantee the hotel that we will use a certain number of sleeping rooms so that we can use the meeting rooms. It is hard to predict how many people will attend.

Our next convention will be in Dublin, Ireland, in June of 2018. Plan now to attend. The planners already have put in an enormous amount of work and they are prepared to answer all questions. You will find more about that in another section of [The Listening Post](#).

As I take on a new role as president, I want to say that I read my email regularly. Feel free to contact me on anything and I promise to respond as quickly as I can. I will say more about the board's activities in future issues.

THE LISTENING POST

Vol. 122, September 2017

Joyce Donen Hirschhorn, In Memoriam

Joyce Donen Hirschhorn, 90 of Killingworth, died peacefully in her home, with her children by her bedside, on February 14, of complications from a stroke. She was predeceased by her beloved husband of 58 years, Adrian. She is survived by children Robert Hirschhorn of New York City, Nancy Hirschhorn of Washington, DC; and her sister, Gloria Donen Sosin, of White Plains, NY. Born in Rye, New York, she was the daughter of the late Isaac and Edith (Koozis) Donen. She received her B.A. from the University of Michigan and her M.A. from Columbia University. Hirschhorn served on the faculty at Gateway Community College for 21 years and was named professor emerita of speech communication. In Killingworth, she served on the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Democratic Town Committee. She was named one of the 100 outstanding women in Connecticut in 2003 for her many contributions to the state. She served on the Board of Directors of the Women's Campaign School at Yale, Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters and The [American Lung Association](#). Her other civic activities included leading discussion groups along the Connecticut shoreline and serving as a Justice of the Peace. Hirschhorn was a humanist, existentialist, feminist, and community activist. She was a founding and life member of the International Listening Association. She called herself a true dilettante, exploring art, singing, dancing, acting, playing tennis and writing. Her letters to the editor appeared in the New York Times and the New Haven Register. Joyce and Adrian were avid world travelers. In recent years, she enjoyed her regular bridge games and book club with friends.

Friends wishing to send notes to her children can direct them to:

258 Chestnut Hill Road
Killingworth, CT 06419-1361

ILA deeply regrets the passing of Joyce, a proud founding member of the association.



Past Presidential Address: Omaha 2017

Kent L. Zimmerman

Good evening and thank you for attending tonight's Awards dinner for the International Listening Association.

O-M-A-H-A! Set- Hut!

Sports are big in America. Football is the most watched sport. Athletes are idolized by kids and even adults. How many of you (or someone you know) actually own a jersey of your favorite team or player? Come on now....you can admit it.

One former star of the National Football League in America was Peyton Manning. He was one of the premier quarterbacks ever to play the game.

Late in his career, he adopted a habit of yelling "Omaha" while his team was lined up and ready to run an offensive play. Television microphones picked up the sounds and broadcast them into the homes of millions of fans.

Manning was born and bred in Tennessee. Why would he yell "Omaha" of all places before the ball was hiked?

During his playing career, he was asked the question – What does "Omaha" mean? Manning would give vague answers, like: "Omaha is a run play, but it could be a pass play or a play-action pass, depending on a couple things: it could be the direction of the wind; or the jerseys that we were supposed to be wearing. It varies, play to play. So, there's your answer to that one."

Did he answer the question? Not at all.

When he retired last year, he finally told the media the meaning behind "Omaha." He said, "Omaha was just an indicator word. It was a trigger word that meant we were changing the play. There was little time on the clock, and that ball needed to be snapped right now to let my team know that 'Hey, we're going to Plan B, there's not much time left.' It's a rhythmic three-syllable word,

O-ma-ha; set; hut. ”

As I reflected on my year as President of the International Listening Association, I was like Peyton Manning – I looked around and started yelling "O-ma-ha."

After looking at the membership patterns and number of membership renewals, we needed to change the play. The Board knew we had to offer more substance for the members to stay and for new members to join. So we asked the membership what it wanted. At the top of the list was a social media footprint; our first O-M-A-H-A!

Thanks to the alliance the Board formed with former ILA President, Chris Bond, he found two willing seniors, Gillian and Cole, in his class who were interested in a school year internship. We named the internship for these students: Social Media Coordinators. The students were respon-

sible for creating a model of sustainability, presenting their research at the Convention, posting relevant listening related comments on the three social media accounts the Association has, and monitoring those three accounts. They shared their wisdom of youth with those of us who were not familiar with the social media format; the essential tips for popularity; or the importance of being relevant. They served the Association for two academic terms, earned a small stipend which was paid by an anonymous donor, and left a legacy for the next Coordinator.

Since they graduated last month, the Board had a burden to find a replacement. Thanks to the help of Gayle Pohl, the Listening Post Editor, we found a wonderful replacement. Erin was approved by the Social Media Task Force and began working as the Social Media Coordinator with First Vice President Elect Helen Ralston last week. We are thrilled to have someone in place to post items from the Convention.

In addition, in our search of summer interns, we found a second impressive candidate, Zachary, from Austin. He will be working exclusively with Sheila Bentley's International Day of Listening Committee on social media matters.

The Association membership told us the website was stale. Here comes our second O-M-A-H-A! When our former Web Editor abruptly resigned, we were without this key resource. No one on the Board had that specialized skill set so we posted an advertisement and found Nicole Bodin. She came to us with an array of related and impressive experiences. She has been working closely with Helen and Executive Director Nan on a completely different look. The feedback from the membership indicates the look is more professional and easier to navigate.

A third O-M-A-H-A! that could give members a benefit for membership was the expanded development of the Webinar Series. With the leadership of former ILA Presidents Laura Janusik, Phil Tirpak along with Helen, four webinars were offered this year. Marva McIntosh presented Yes, Listening Matters; Sheila Bentley presented: Listening Makes Us More Human; Michael Gingerich and Tom Kaden presented Technology's Connecting Power, and most recently, Carey Haslam from England presented Listening as the Key to Unlocking Interpersonal Conflicts. Each session was professionally delivered; well attended and concluded with an invitation to join the ILA.

Former ILA President, Sheila Bentley, was our Special Projects Board member. With her finely tuned organizational skills, she sought and received approval to offer the International Day of Listening last September 15th... yet another (the fourth) O-M-A-H-A! Imagine trying to coordinate a one-day event around the world! With Sheila and her faithful committee, over 8,000 lives were touched that day. That is a remarkable figure. Testimonies from around the world were received and shared. She was careful to acknowledge the assistance and support of the International Listening Association on that special day. The Day had so much to offer and has so much potential, so the Board approved the International Day of Listening for September 21st in 2017. So - mark your calendar and look for updates from Sheila.

Our fifth O-M-A-H-A! moment came when the Board had suspended the Certified Listening Professional program two years ago. There was a quandary among the membership – what is the Board going to do with the CLP? Thanks to the leadership of former ILA President, Michael Gilbert, a blue-ribbon committee of ILA leaders spent time examining the original intent of the program, revising the existing process, and offering specific suggestions for enhancing the renewal procedure. The Board recently received their proposal and expressed support for the recommendation, pending several revisions.

The sixth O-M-A-H-A! moment came when we realized we had organizations who were interested in collaborating with us, but they were unable to make the plunge into an organizational membership. With the direction of Helen and John Backman, the Board received a recommendation for the ILA Affiliate Program. The ILA Affiliate Agreement would create close ties between us and like-minded organizations with an array of mutual benefits: linking to one another's programs, providing space at one another's conventions, and reciprocal writing for other organizational journals. This agreement would provide a low-cost entry to the ILA for organizations that cannot afford the Organizational Member fee, or those that desire a looser connection. The Board passed that motion this spring, and two Affiliates have since been added to the roles!

Since we are not the Omaha Listening Association, our seventh and final O-M-A-H-A! moment came when the Board agreed to honor its commitment to be international every five years. Thanks to the diligent work of Jennie Grau and Elaine O'Mullane, the Board voted to go abroad in 2018. Dublin will be the new Omaha. Our friend, Elaine, will be the friendly face in Dublin as she serves as our local contact. Jennie has been in the weeds lately, as we say in the restaurant business, finalizing the contractual details while serving as the co-Convention planner. She and the next First Vice President, Helen, will be updating you on the exciting details in the coming days. So get that passport updated.

Your ILA Board has been busy this year. On average, we meet online every six weeks. In addition to the Board members I have already mentioned:

- Thanks to the generous offer by our immediate Past President, Phil Tirpak, we met via his professional Zoom Account. He also became the tech guru for the webinars.
- Kae Van Engen served as our Secretary and had the distinction of sending me the draft of the meeting minutes – minutes after our meeting ended. Is that why they call them – meeting minutes?
- Former ILA President Melissa Beall offered her parliamentary advice many times this year, and I knew from her vast experience that the Association was receiving solid counsel.
- Michael Z Murphy willingly took on the task of the Awards Committee Chair, and you just witnessed the fruits of that committee's labors.

- John Backman served as our 2nd VP for Membership. He communicated with every member whose membership lapsed or with every new member. With his outstanding writing skills, each note was a gem. He was unable to join us this week.
- Our editors, which include Former ILA President, Margarete Imhof, of the International Journal of Listening, Erica Lamm of the Listening Educator and Gayle Pohl of the Listening Post, contributed their time and talents to create, publish and distribute publications for members and non-members. All were able to see more clearly who we are and what we do in the field of Listening.
- Convention co-chairs Charles and Marlene Veenstra worked faithfully and tirelessly in producing this year's wonderful Convention. "Omaha" will never be the same when we hear its name! Would all of the ILA Executive Board members please stand. Kindly join me in thanking all of them for a job well done! (Applause!)

Even though we had a busy and productive year in the ILA, the clock is ticking on the International Listening Association. There are competing organizations vying for our existing members. Our membership is graying more each year. Budgets are tight so people are making difficult choices on which organizations best meet their professional or personal needs. The ball needs to be snapped. We need all of the players suited up and ready to play. We have to go to Plan B – right now. We should be yelling "O-M-A-H-A!" again this coming year!

I look forward to seeing the leadership of the next ILA Peyton Manning – otherwise known as Charles - come to fruition. He has assembled a capable and energetic Board. While you might be boarding a plane or driving home, they begin meeting tomorrow morning. The reality is they cannot do the work alone. While I mentioned many individuals who volunteered their time, talent and treasure, we have some ILA member players on the sidelines. If you have not volunteered to serve on an ILA committee, stop Charles tonight or tell any Board member tonight before you leave the Hilton.

If you are excited about something, you have to tell someone. There was a men's clothing store in my hometown that had the motto – "one man tells another; it's Gilbert's...the finest in men's suits." In fact, my HS math teacher would announce before we took an exam, "Remember, we do not use the Gilbert's method during the exam time. No talking." If you are excited about your car, you offer to drive anywhere and anytime. If you are excited about your home, you offer to host the next party immediately. If you are excited about your grandkids, you have stories and photos of your grandkids. Speaking of those grandkid photos...

So, if you are excited about what the ILA has done, is doing or will be doing for you, you have to tell someone. In Tucson, I made a promise last year. I promised to bring in at least one new member. If I did not fulfill that promise within three months, I would pay for the new member

ship out of my own pocket. Two people joined the ILA this year at my request. Is that enough? Probably not? Would it help the organization if every member – both present and not present - met that same standard next year? Indeed it would!

Here are two examples where others demonstrated behaviors worthy of recognition and a conversation about the ILA; these might be representative of a situation in your life as well.

- 1) I was referred to a dermatologist because I acted foolishly as a college student. I went to the region's top-rated skin doctor. As I was waiting in Room #1, he entered with his private nurse a half a step behind him. He held a pocket tape-recorder and was mumbling something into it. He glanced over his shoulder and muttered, "...Zimmerman..." He walked over to me, touched my face for about five seconds, walked back to the table, muttered some more gibberish, had his nurse give me a prescription, and said, "See you in six months," as he exited the room. I said something like, "But doctor," as the nurse said, "That's the way he is." She then turned and walked out.

Not only did he violate every guideline in the Doctor-Patient section of the Worthington / Fitch-Hauser book, I did as well. It was a bizarre visit.

In six months, I returned, but this time I was ready. As he went through the same actions, I waited for my moment.

He entered with his private nurse a half a step behind him. He held a pocket tape-recorder and was mumbling something into it. He glanced over his shoulder and muttered, "...Zimmerman..." He walked over to me, touched my face for about five seconds, walked back to the table, muttered some more gibberish, had his nurse give me a prescription, and said, "See you in six months," as he began to exit the room. I stated loudly, "Excuse me, doctor!" The surprised specialist stopped, looked at me oddly, took his hand off the door knob, and then timidly walked over to me. I said, "I have a few questions for you." He stayed five minutes, answered my questions, shook my hand and wished me a good summer.

When I saw six months later, our routine was totally different. The doctor entered the room, called me by name, walked over to me, shook my hand and asked me how I was. I complimented him on his care of his patients. I told that I taught Listening, and he just passed the doctor-patient test. After the brief exam, he smiled as he left the room and said, "See you in six months, Professor."

Here is a second example of demonstrated behaviors worthy of recognition and a conversation about the ILA:

- 2) My wife and I were in California. We had a 6 a.m. flight back to the eastern part of the US. When we arrived at the airport, we learned that the flight was cancelled because the flight crew

overslept and arrived too late at the airport. For discipline, the crew was grounded by the airlines.

We were stuck. We had to find a new way home. We had an ill family member at home. We were told to go to the airline's Customer Service Desk and plead our case. My wife and I told the airline representative our story. She nodded but said little. She said, "Please have a seat." Twenty minutes later, she called us to the desk. She apologized and said there were no seats on the next two flights to our home town. She paused a few moments and then said with a smirk and a wink, "But I did find you two first class seats. Go home and take care of your loved one." I told her that she went above and beyond the call of duty of listening and responding to customer concerns. I wrote a lengthy letter of appreciation to her supervisor.

Finally, in closing, as a man of faith, I want to thank the Lord for His leading this year. In many ways, it was a challenging year, but I repeatedly found assurance in Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Here are three ways this happens for me personally:

- 1) I can do all things when I face the trials in my life. I can not only endure the trials, but I can grow from them as well.
- 2) I can do all things when I am content with what I have. Understanding the difference between a need and a want is critical.
- 3) I can do all things when I trust solely in Jesus.

Thanks again for the opportunity to be your President. I have considered it an honor and a privilege. As Former ILA President, Manny Steil, has said many times, we are simply standing on the shoulders of giants who preceded us. It is my time, however, to step aside and make way for the next President of the International Listening Association.

I have asked Member #1, Manny Steil, to tell the important story of the gavel. Then, I would also like to invite President-Elect Charles Veenstra to come forward for a two-part gavel ceremony.

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On behalf of the International Listening Association, it is my privilege to pass on the gavel of the presidency. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you, for the every first time, the new President of the International Listening Association, Charles Veenstra!

Tom Wirkus, in Memoriam

Thomas Edward Wirkus, Ph.D., died on August 21, 2017. Tom was born to Joseph (“Sam”) and Jamina (“Jimmy”) Wirkus on May 31, 1933, in Marshfield, Wisconsin. He graduated with a B.S. degree in English and Speech from UW-Stevens Point (1956). Following teaching assignments at high schools in Wisconsin, he received an M.S. degree in Speech from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He began a thirty-five year career at UW-La Crosse in 1959. He completed his doctorate in Speech Education and Radio-TV at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL in 1965. In addition to instructional duties, he served as department chair in Speech Communication and Theatre for nine years; was the “voice” of the marching band for twenty-four years; and spent twenty-nine years as the district coordinator of forensics for the western Wisconsin area for the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association. He was named Wisconsin’s outstanding college speech educator by the Wisconsin Communication Association in 1988 and was elected to the Hall of Fame of the International Listening Association in 2011. He held emeriti memberships in the American Communication Association, the Central States Communication Association, and Phi Delta Kappa.

Tom met Lois Langfeldt in college at UW-Stevens Point and they were married July 28, 1956. Four wonderful children were born to them: Terrance Thomas (Kristine) Wirkus, Sheila Ann Wirkus, Mary Therese Wirkus, and Timothy Joseph (Laurie) Wirkus. Following retirement, Lois and Tom had an opportunity to do some traveling and spent many years volunteering at the Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman in La Crosse and the Gunderson Medical Center in Onalaska. Tom also served as the first president of the Lauderdale North Association. Tom represented western Wisconsin on the Board of the Wisconsin Public Radio Association for twelve years, serving as president for three years.

Tom’s major hobby was music. He began drumming at the age of twelve in Marshfield, and played his first dance job at age 13 after receiving special permission to join the musicians’ union. He played with the Swingsters, the Russ Nelson Orchestra and Wally Ives and the Jolly Dutchmen. In 1965 he and colleague, Lee Glasel, formed the Tom Lee Orchestra. Later, Tom fronted the Tom Wirkus Four. Many will remember Tom in the percussion section of the La Crosse Concert Band. He played in that unit for fifty-one consecutive summers. He spent many enjoyable years with Reverend Allan Townsend and “The Wonderful World Jazz Band”. His last affiliation was as one of two drummers with “The Grumpy Old Men”.

Tom leaves a loving wife and best friend of 64 years, Lois; children Terrance (Kristine), Sheila, Mary (Tom Anderson), and Timothy (Laurie); grandchildren Taylor, Taryn, Nicholas, and Joshua; a brother, Mark, and brothers and sisters-in-law. He was predeceased by his parents and grandparents, a brother, Joe, and a granddaughter, Laura.

If you would like to write to his wife, her home address is:

Lois Wirkus
[1043 Lauderdale Place, North Onalaska, WI 54650-3296](#)

ILA send their deepest regrets on losing one of its own founding members.



Check out the latest issue of the International Journal of Listening!

Margarete Imhof

The final issue of the International Journal of Listening presents three original research papers which should not be missed. Franca Ferrari-Bridgers and her colleagues report on a study, which they conducted to learn more about how critical listening skills can be successfully taught to math and engineering students. In their paper, you can see how they went about teaching critical listening skills and how they collected evidence for the efficiency of their program. The other two papers presented by Ceri Sims and Harumi Kimura investigate how personal characteristics, i.e., anxiety and the “Big Five” (openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability) have an impact on how people listen and communicate. Find out more about the insights and see what you can learn about listening.

ILA Members have free access to all journal articles. Please log in at www.listen.org and follow the link to the journal in the Members Only section. Do not forget to consider the International Journal of Listening as an outlet for your work. For more information on submissions please refer to the journal’s webpage and the guide for authors. If you have any questions to the editor, please feel free to mail me at imhof@uni-mainz.de.

International Journal of Listening Word Scramble

Elements of the article

iaitcrslsitlnnegi	_____
xaeinty	_____
nenospse	_____
eeesealrnasbg	_____
ceisuintseosnsnc	_____
vxsraerienot	_____
sat loabtl nitomieiy	_____
oocnuntciimma	_____
tiaeoa aphcitrnssccrslr	_____
hamt	_____
ignngnireee	_____
inccefyife	_____
llsiks	_____
nuojalr	_____



Make a Celtic Connection: Listen and Learn with the ILA in Dublin, Ireland in June 2018

Jennie Grau

Where better to host a Listening convention than in the heart of Dublin, a city world famous for music, literature, friendly people, and the “gift of the gab.” Join us June 20 – 23, 2018, on the historic campus of Trinity College for this unique event. You will find details on registration, lodging, transportation, and how to submit a proposal on the ILA website at www.listen.org/convention

Ten reasons to Listen and learn with us in Dublin.

1. Discover people from around the world who share your passion for Listening.
2. Broaden your understanding of cross cultural Listening academically and experientially.
3. Discuss listening or catch up with colleagues at the “listening lounge”.
4. Present or partake in programs that explore the breadth and depth of listening across diverse perspectives, disciplines, methodologies, theories, and arts, in numerous applied settings, presented using a variety of engaging formats.
5. Visit our “Author Area” ... perhaps you can get your favorite Listening book signed.
6. Meet, greet, and gab with leading listening scholars and practitioners.
7. Find partners for collaborative ventures in business, research,

and teaching.

8. Be part of our friendly, supportive environment to exchange ideas, receive feedback, unleash curiosity, and find inspiration.
9. Explore ideas, create fruitful collaborations, celebrate research, and experience Listening like never before.
10. It won't be the same without you!

Dublin is a welcoming and walkable city brimming with culture, history, food, and fun. It is hard not to find something to love. Stroll St. Steven's Green, soak up the Georgian architecture, or discover Irish treasures at the National Museum of Ireland (all free by the way). More the arts and letters type? Explore the National Gallery of Ireland, meander by statues of Irish authors, or stop by the Dublin Writers Museum. Or perhaps you would fancy a literary pub crawl, a pint of Guinness with panoramic city view, a Jameson factory tour, or an evening of good “crack” at a local pub. Not the drinking type? How about history? Check out the Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin Castle, and of course Trinity College and the Book of Kells. If you plan to bring your family there is the Dublin Zoo, the National Wax Museum, or Dublinia with life size Viking and Medieval displays. So much to experience, so little time.

See you in Dublin!

Marty Dowds Irish Dance Academy Kick Off ILA's 2018 Dublin Convention Announcement



(left to right is Mary Burke, Neave Corrigan, Libby Brueggemann, and Siobhan McDonnell.)

Did you feel the floor vibrate with complex dance steps?
Did you sense the excitement?

Don't worry if you missed these great dancers because you can join us
next year in Dublin!

ILA 2018 Annual Convention to be held at Trinity College
Dublin, Ireland

We were privileged to sample the culture and history we will encounter
next year in Ireland when students from the [Marty Dowds Irish Dance
Academy](#) performed for us at the recent ILA Convention in Omaha,
Nebraska. Their enthusiasm and energy were infectious.

Save June 20-23, 2018 and join us at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland
for our 2018 Convention. We have room for 110 participants. Registration
will be on a first come first served basis. **Registration and Call for
Proposals** can be found at www.listen.org/convention. The 2018 theme is
Listening Beyond Boundaries. We are seeking proposals that go beyond
boundaries of discipline, methods, theory, arts, and applied settings, to
include a variety of formats, topics, and perspectives.

Join us in Dublin and experience Listening like you've never experi-
enced it before.

Special Irish Dance Offer

Any ILA member from Omaha, Kansas City or Lincoln who is interested
in participating in adult classes (Omaha only) or has someone who might
like to try our Irish dancing (e.g. child, grandchild, niece, nephew, etc), is
invited to a complimentary first class. In addition, we can provide a \$10
off coupon for the first month of class. Students are taught by a world
champion Irish step dancer and former lead dancer with Riverdance who
follows a proven traditional Irish method of instruction. Contact Jennie
Grau for coupon. jennifer@grauc.com.



The How to Dance Irish First Hand



PUBLIC RELATIONS IS PERSUASION ON A GRAND SCALE BUT STARTS LOCALLY WITH YOU

Sherry Wien

In the March 2017 edition of Listening Post, Michael Purdy wrote how ILA members can help raise our profile in the world and increase our chances of attracting more sponsorships, endorsements, and members. He described simple ways of using three of our social media platforms: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Mark your presence by liking, commenting, sharing, following, and joining. Let ILA know that you notice our publicity efforts. Let ILA know what you think about our content. Let your friends and family know about ILA. While social media is important, traditional ways of public relations are still effective. "Spreading the good word" can be a conversation, a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, or organizing an event in your community that gets media coverage.

As the Public Relations, Member-At-Large, I will be working with the Executive Board and ILA members in the following months. I will be asking many questions about our association since this is only my second year of membership. I will be asking members to take specific actions that will help persuade others to join our association "as a dialogue space, a resource network, a news source and a worldwide community" as described on the ILA website homepage. Think of how you can start a conversation about listening and ILA with family, friends, and people around you. Post an announcement about yourself (humble brag) as a listening resource or about a listening event in your community through Twitter or Facebook. Offer your expert opinion about a national or global news story through print (write a letter to the editor or an Op-Ed column), through radio (call in to a talk show), or through television (pitch a story to your local broadcasters). In future issues of the Listening Post, I'll show you how to participate locally to accomplish persuasion on a grand scale.

According to the Public Relations Society of America website, "public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutual beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." ILA and its members must communicate what benefits they both want and be strategic in working to build that relationship. What does ILA want as an association? We've identified our objectives:

- Increase the visibility and credibility of listening
- Promote teaching and training in listening
- Promote the scholarly and systematic study of listening
- Meet diverse member needs

Our members described what they wanted from ILA:

- Content and resources about listening with more social media visibility
- A Certified Listening Professional program to demonstrate expertise
- Opportunities to help others in a supportive community with more events
- Social friendships and more partnerships with other organizations and institutions

In the book *Straight Talk About Public Relations: What You Think You Know Is Wrong*, Robert Wynne defines PR as "persuasion created to mobilize an audience to take a certain action" (2017, p. 3). By mobilizing ourselves to increase our visibility, we can increase our membership. Growing our association means more content, resources, opportunities,

friendships, and partnerships. In order to grow, what actions do we want people unfamiliar with ILA to take?

- Be engaged with current ILA members through personal interaction, social media, and traditional media
- Visit the ILA website
- Become a member
- Register for the convention
- Be an active association member

Our association runs on volunteers without a large operating budget. Advertising may be very expensive; but public relations is more affordable. According to the Journal of Applied Business and Economics (2014), "since Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are inherently social webpages, it may be beneficial for businesses to try and become a part of the conversation rather than force potential customers to view their ads" (p. 80). Many people ignore advertisements. We cannot afford to pay for media coverage in national or global markets; but we each can say and do something to persuade others in our local communities around the world. Let's start with conversations. Why did you become a member of ILA? Why should someone else join? How has ILA helped you? How can ILA help others? How can you help ILA with public relations?

Snap the Gap: Five steps to Listen Better!

By- Shalini Chakranarayan Ph.D

(Assistant Professor, English Language Center, Jazan University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Teaching listening to nursing students has been an enlightening experience for me and over the years some of the noteworthy thinkers and speakers in the domain namely Julian Treasure and Alex Lickerman have cast a deep impact on my delivery of 'training in listening.' Below are some of the first-and experiences I would like to share.

1. One of the most effective exercise, evidenced by me, in imparting listening skills has been the **3-minute silence technique**. The same has been endorsed by Julain Treasure in the youtube video '5 Ways to Listen Better'. The exercise focuses on re-calibration and re-adjustment of personal listening power. This helped the Nursing students in 'feeding their imagination' as mentioned by Alex Lickerman in his article, *Happiness in the World: How Silence can be used as a tool*. It is well established that the numerous sounds that one hears hampers the ability to listen effectively. Hence, a miniscule deliberate effort by the trainer turns worthwhile classroom tool in no time. This exercise placed somewhere half-way in the lecture ensured minimal commotion and barred distractions like ringing of mobiles.

2. The second step involved taking a group of 8 to 10 students everyday to the cafeteria and asking them to **jot down five individual channels of sounds** that they heard. The vertical lists of four to five groups (a.b.c.d or e) were ready by the weekend. The lists fell in two broad categories. The first was intra-group lists where the same group students were subjected to the same environment for the same time span of time. The second was inter-group lists involving different groups subjected to sounds at different times.

Inter-group Comparison	Intra-group Comparison	Research ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> Common sounds in the groups a, b, c, d or e were listed. <input type="checkbox"/> Unique sounds which only one or two of the students had jotted down were also identified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Common sounds which most of the students had been able to identify were listed. <input type="checkbox"/> Unique sounds which only one student had written while the others had failed to listen was also highlighted.	<p>The commonalities of individual sound channels which the students were able to identify paves way for researchers to identify the ‘why’ in it which is rarely questioned. A similar study could be applied for the unique identifications too.</p> <p>The relationship between research and teaching of listening would not be established as the above idea would be in a state of infancy.</p>

3. Julian’s policy of *playing mundane sounds* also worked well for me. The not so popular sounds like a crowd raining slogans, etc. were played in the classroom with the laptop and speakers to challenge the listening skill of the students. I found some resistance too but eventually worked out a way. Perhaps an unattractive sound logically calls for a deliberate effort on the student to listen and eventually conditions the mind to listen to what is required. The resource of selecting mundane sounds was built up by the step 2 of my strategy. Say the sounds which one particular group was not able to listen well were listed in the upcoming week’s *mundane sound training schedule*.

4. Inculcating a *habit of English conversation* in my students, has always topped the charts of my priorities especially in the Saudi Arabian context. The students were asked to talk to each other after the following listening micro task. One audio was suitably selected from the introductory chapter and set aside for two situations. In the first one, the audio was played through the laptop and speakers and the students identified the main ideas in the audio, say- how many people were talking, what was the theme of their conversation or where was the conversation taking place, and so on. In situation 2, the same audio was played again but this time through the headphones to individuals and they were asked to analyze for specific information embedded in it.

The idea behind this task is a public listening scenario and a personal listening bubble which is uninterrupted and continuous. This has a direct correlation to what the nursing students had to undergo, say listen to instructions during their medical laboratory practical from their teachers and listen to phone calls from patients while they were on apprenticeship.

5. The last activity is a *whisper game* popular globally as Chinese Whispers. Normally in a low academic scenario, say while waiting for some of the students to join the lecture, I asked those students who were sitting in the classroom to take turns and begin the cycle of speaking a complete sentence in English to the student sitting next in the row. The whisper would continue and finally the one at the end of that row would speak up what was whispered in the ear. The original sentence and the text spoken were eventually compared. A personal amendment crept in once the same text was retold over a number of times. Voice modulation and attentive listening perhaps assisted in improving their academic scores.



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Answers to Word Scramble

1. critical listening
2. anxiety
3. openness
4. agreeableness
5. conscientiousness
6. extraversion
7. emotional stability
8. communication
9. personal characteristics
10. math
11. engineering
12. efficiency
13. skills
14. journal