

May, 2019 Issue 125

ILA CONVENTION 2019

What fun we had in Vancouver!



ILA Hall of Fame Winner



We are proud to announce that Professor Emeritus Charles Veenstra Ph.D. was inducted into the International Listening Association Hall of Fame at the 40th ILA International Convention in Vancouver, Canada.

Dr. Veenstra has been a member of the International Listening Association (ILA) since 1981 and, over the decades, has served on countless ILA committees and on the ILA Board, most recently as ILA President 2017-18.

As a Master Teacher, he taught Listening at Dordt College from 1983 to 2019. Dr. Hoekstra, President of Dordt College, has said, “Dr. Veenstra is very special.”

Dr. Veenstra’s listening attitude, skills, knowledge, and practice have served Dordt students and the ILA in extraordinary and immeasurable ways. He practices what he teaches. Beyond Dordt College, he has conducted numerous listening workshops and spoken at many conferences, schools, and churches for more than thirty years.

Comments from his ILA Board colleagues include these: ‘he demonstrates trustworthiness and inspires confidence; he is kind and thoughtful; he actually listens; he looks at the whole picture and not just the issue; he has generosity and care for others; he is a thoroughly decent man, loyal and calm under pressure’.

In short, Dr. Charles Veenstra is a quiet listening giant who has moved the field of Listening and the ILA in a most impactful and impressive way. We are delighted to honor him as the newest member of the International Listening Association Hall of Fame.

Congratulations, Charles!



Listening is an art that requires attention over talent,
spirit over ego, others over self.
(Dean Jackson, author)



The Lifetime Achievement Award Winner is....

At the 40th annual [International Listening Association](#) convention award dinner, on March 22, Dr. Nan Johnson-Curiskis was honored to receive the ILA Lifetime Achievement Award. She is only the fifth winner in 40 years of ILA history so it is indeed a superior honor.

Dr. Johnson-Curiskis is a founding and life member of the ILA. She was inducted into the ILA Hall of Fame in 2009. She received the ILA Educator of the Year Award in 2005 and a Special Recognition Award in 2018. She won the President's Award in 1983 and in 2018. However, this honor is most significant. She has been placed in a league with only four other winners who are all outstanding scholars and professionals. Congratulations!



Listening for Main Ideas or Specific Information: Fine Tuning Audio Texts for Student Suitability and Understanding

By Shalini Chakranarayan PhD

I was bombarded with a query from a student in my class, who wanted to know how the same audio can be heard for two different objectives. This is a common scenario in the listening session that one audio content is employed for 'listening for main ideas' and the same audio content might also be employed for 'listening for specific information'. Lesson plans, instruction logs, skill meetings, departmental meetings often equip the trainer with a lot of intellectual confidence to handle the same audio for two different objectives in a smooth and undisturbed manner. I, as a language trainer, exercise full control over the pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening tasks to reach the desired goal of fulfilling my learning objectives for the day.

My student had very innocently laid before me a very delicate issue: how can the understanding of listening for main ideas be achieved in real life situations. Everyday life does not offer us any scope for repetition or pre-listening tasks, or for laying an optimum ground as the classroom situation does, so this query provided me with enough motivation for the day. I was moved, felt highly challenged and the present article throws some light on this issue.

A student must understand the basic existential difference between the two types of Listening. A general everyday conversation is primarily based on the main ideas that one picks up. As the conversation goes deeper, or extends longer from a reflective perspective, one can listen for specific ideas. Specific ideas build up content and knowledge. My students will listen for main ideas if they have a brief introductory chat with a colleague whom they meet at the hospital as once a week for practical. They will listen for specific ideas while attending lectures on medical procedures, or seeking medical advice on post-operative care, etc. In a nutshell, the various situations have to be comprehended by the students themselves. Classroom activities, tasks, fine modulation of the audio content play a vital role. Everyday classroom talks enable students to build up confidence in the prompt understanding needed to reciprocate if needed. Focusing on keywords, emphasized words or words connected with the main theme of the conversation takes priority. Classroom sessions based on listening objectives need to be filled with micro-listening tasks where the trainer plays numerous audios and asks the students to find out the main points not focusing on intricate details and vice versa. The audio script and the answers jotted down by the students can be kept in a file to build up data.

There is constant scope for improvement and incorporating nuances in my classroom teaching. All thanks to those students who take an interest in English language learning and generate queries in the class.



Tamsin Hartley, Poet

Listening

By Tamsin Hartley

Simply.
At source
from rooted acceptance.

The spectrum of your magical thinking,
nourished from fertile soil.

Drawn through veins.
Drawn, non-striving.
Trusting their delivery to
delight in the light of this day.

Sometimes with humour:
fluttering, flickering.
Sometimes with trance-like stillness.

Always inspiring,
revealing, healing.



ILA Life Member Frances Bethea Grant



Frances Bethea Grant, born in Sumter, South Carolina in January 1932, was committed to her family, faith and friends, and leaves a strong legacy of educational achievement and empowerment of others. The daughter of Edward and Mildred Ladson Bethea; mother of Pamela Grant Little and Christine Grant Yeboah; mother-in-law of Kwame Yeboah and the grandmother of Kofie Yeboah. She earned her BA degree at State University at Albany (1954), and MS in Psychology from College of Saint Rose, in Albany, New York (1984). She taught social studies and science at several schools in South Carolina, Pennsylvania and New York and worked for 20 years at GE's Knolls Atomic Power Lab and Westinghouse's Machinery Apparatus Operation as a technical editor/writer. Frances credited her strong Christian faith as the foundation for her life successes.

Blind Dates, Partnerships, and Listening

By Jennifer M. Grau, Grau Interpersonal Communication

I need your help. I'm looking to have a few blind dates. I'm hoping you'll set me up. REALLY!

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about listening and blind dating. What makes for a good date? What leads to a second date? And ultimately, what leads to a lasting partnership? My husband of 26 years is not the slightest bit concerned by my current preoccupation.

He is a wise man and has watched me fall in love with a few ILA projects before. He is also a good listener so rather than assuming our marriage is "on the rocks" he inquires what this is all about. I tell him that *I have recently been asked to lead the ILA's Partnership Program and I need to find a model (yes, my logical positivist training is still with me) from which I can do this work. Blind dating seems to fit the bill. Let me explain.*

When you agree to go on a blind date, you are exploring a potential relationship. You are cautiously making a small commitment that may lead to a lasting mutually beneficial relationship. If you are asked to do too much too soon without seeing the value, you may never have a second date. A lasting partnership is based on discovering and growing common ground.

Remember, 'Be Bold... Listen for Common Ground' is the theme for International Day of Listening September 19, 2019.

So as the ILA prepares to date potential Partner Affiliates, I narrowed our dating pool to colleges, universities and other educational institutions.

Here is where I think we have common ground: We are both:

- Committed to growing and applying knowledge.
- Interested in theoretical and applied research.
- Seeking opportunities for global collaboration.
- Providing opportunities for student growth.
- Supporting faculty and graduate student projects, scholarship and teaching
- Recognizing outstanding contributions in our field

With this in mind, let's consider our mutual benefits. For the ILA, partnership brings the possibility of new members, new ideas, and new organizations involvement with Listening. When an educational institution becomes a Partner Affiliate of the ILA they can benefit from:

- Opportunities to present to international audiences at the annual ILA convention and at ILA online events such as the ILA Webinar Series
 - Display opportunities at the ILA Annual International Convention
 - Papers and articles published in the ILA journals
 - A platform for marketing to international students and faculty
 - Participation in the ILA Speakers Bureau
- And much more....

My goal for this year is to grow ILA's Partnership Program by 50% by exploring the common ground we have with educational institutions around the world and inviting them to become an ILA Partner Affiliate or Organizational Member.

This is where you come in. I'm asking you to help me reach my goal by setting me up on some "blind dates". Send me the names and contact information of people at educational institutions who may see the value of our Partnership. I will do the rest.

Please, set me up on a few blind dates. You can even tell my husband!

How can students who are miles apart benefit from Listening to each other's stories?

By Mary Lahman and Sandra Bodin-Lerner



What do students from Manchester University in Indiana have in common with students, 672.4 miles away, at Montclair State University in New Jersey?

To find out, ILA Members, Professor Mary Lahman and Professor Sandra Bodin-Lerner linked up their classes across the miles to tell their own life stories. The students engaged in honoring and celebrating the diversity and commonality of human experience - and learned to Listen!

How did they do it?

Students listened to the *Moth Radio Hour*: <https://themoth.org/radio-hour> to explore how stories are both listenable and memorable. They then developed their own 5-minute stories. They worked hard to make their stories "stick" by learning how to develop and tell a story before recording and sharing their creations.

Would your students enjoy such an experience? Contact Sandra for more information.

Tribute to Life Member Tom Hickerson: A Listener

By Andrew Wolvin

ILA members were saddened to learn recently that Tom Hickerson, had died in April, 2018, of kidney failure. Retired, Tom had been undergoing dialysis treatment for some time. One of Tom's first students posted a fitting tribute: "He was my high school English teacher his first-year teaching at Sonoma Valley High, and he was the greatest."

The ultimate listener, Tom was a highly engaging listener who brought a great deal of positive energy and insight to what the ILA is all about. For several years he played major league professional baseball. A graduate of California State University Sacramento, he transferred his athletic skills to teach speech and coach golf at Sonoma Valley High School. He also had an active "after school" career as a Sacramento State basketball referee.

On joining the ILA as a Life Member, Tom met and fell in love with my wonderful colleague, Carolyn Coakley, who taught speech at High Point High School in Beltsville, Maryland. They married and Carolyn joined Tom and his son, Chad, in Sonoma. I loved going to their house in Sonoma to work on research projects and take breaks at great Sonoma wineries!

A caring listener, Tom played a vital role in Carolyn's life as she dealt with breast cancer. Describing the important role of listening for breast cancer patients in her paper at our Boston convention (1994), Carolyn noted how Tom "listened and let me know that he understood and shared my feelings."

At our 1997 ILA convention in Mobile, we celebrated Tom's 50th birthday. The party was a highlight of his listening life. His touching thank you in The Listening Post reflected his love of the ILA: "I can't imagine my transition to 'semi-centennial' with a more caring and more enjoyable association of people."

We can take comfort in knowing that Tom is with Carolyn (who died of breast cancer that returned in 2008) and that their ILA legacy continues to encourage our efforts to make the world a better place through listening.

ILA Coaching & Mentoring Program Takes Off

By Kathy O'Brien

The ILA Coaching & Mentoring Program has made a great start. Members have welcomed the chance to receive insight and guidance in developing their work in the listening field. Some strong working relationships have already been forged between ILA members.

The program matches a mentee and mentor who have both expressed similar interests or experience, allowing them to connect successfully and choose the content and structure of the mentoring. Some are sharing research for comments. Some benefited from 'road testing' ILA convention presentations pre-Vancouver. Many are keeping an open mind and exploring common ground.

Since a good framework has been established, we are keenly preparing for the next wave of applicants now.

If you would like to join the program, complete the application form on the ILA website [here](#) and return it to Kathy O'Brien: kathyo@redshoe.com.sg

AWARD NOMINATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

The ILA Special Recognition Award for 2019 Goes to Emeritus Professor Michael Purdy.

Dr. Michael Prudy has been an ILA member for 39 years and throughout has been a stalwart and consistent contributor to ILA and the field of Listening. Michael was inducted into the ILA Listening Hall of Fame in 1994 and was honored as the ILA Outstanding Educator In 2010. To his credit, Michael Purdy has not rested on his past, but has continued to serve ILA and the field of Listening in a variety of ways. ILA and the field of listening will continue to move upward and onward as we find more members like Michael who commit their life long time and energy to the advancement of listening.

Michael Gingerich and Tom Kaden of "Someone To Tell It To" receive the ILA Business Sector Award

Michael Gingerich and Tom Kaden are co-founders of "Someone To Tell It To" a non-profit ministry with a mission of creating a caring culture that accompanies others on journeys toward deeper connections. They are working to develop and inspire a movement for people to listen more intently and be more compassionately present in the lives of others.

Professor S.A. Welsh is presented with the ILA Educator of The Year Award

Dr. S.A. Welsh is a Professor at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in communication including Listening, Research Methods and Organizational Communication. Her PhD is in Rhetoric and Organizational Communication. She has been a conscientious ILA member for 10 years. Most recently, she served as Chair of the Research Committee. She has been instrumental in developing both the ILA Student Scholarship Program and the ILA Coaching/Mentoring Program. She is currently a mentor to one of our ILA students. Her own research is fascinating. She does not ‘toot her own horn’, she delivers over and above what is expected, and is a delight to work with. She also embodies the listening skills that we all strive to develop.

The Listener of the Year Award Goes to National Alliance of Mental Illness

The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) uses their #Iwilllisten campaign to encourage dialogue around mental health conditions including depression and anxiety, something that most of us experience at least once in our lives. With the changes that accompany being away from home for the first time, university students are especially vulnerable to depression.

Have you seen their television or bill board ads or their social media campaigns? They are really getting the word out about the importance and power of listening.” The ILA is pleased to recognize the wonderful work NAMI is doing to help people who are vulnerable to depression.

More 2019 ILA Convention Photos from Vancouver



The International Listening Association is governed by the ILA executive Board. The current Board includes the following elected members:

President:	Anita Dorczak
1st VP	Lori Joubert
1st VP Elect	Melissa Beall
Secretary	Vacant
MAL- Public Relations	Gayle Pohl
MAL- Global	Kathy O'Brien
2nd VP Membership	Sandra Bodin-Lerner
MAL-Special Projects	John Backman
Student Member	April French
Immediate Past President	Helen Ralston
Executive Director	Nanette Johnson-Curiskis
IJL Editor	Margarete Imhof
Listening Education Editor	Erica Lamm
Web Editor	Nicole Bodin
Parliamentarian, Ex-Officio	Melissa Beall



**Loved the ILA Convention
in Vancouver?**

**Then make your plans for
Seattle in 2020!**