



# LISTENING POST

ISSUE No. FIFTY-SEVEN • SUMMER 1996

## 2001: A Place Odyssey

by Sheila Bentley

It seems impossible that the year 2001 is only a short five years away, but the Site Selection Committee is now requesting proposals for a site for the 2001 ILA Annual Convention. Perhaps the moon is not yet a viable option, but we are looking for a site with out-of-this-world possibilities for the convention.

If you would be willing to serve as Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee and host the Convention, please let us hear from you. We need information about the city, hotel facilities, the type of support that would be available to ILA, as well as any other details that would support why this location would be the place to be in 2001.

Prior to 2001, the Convention locations will be as follows:

- ◆ 1997 — Mobile, AL
- ◆ 1998 — Kansas City, MO
- ◆ 1999 — Albuquerque, NM
- ◆ 2000 — Virginia Beach, VA

Please send your proposals to:

Sheila C. Bentley  
Bentley Consulting  
1035 West Tree Drive  
Collierville, TN 38017



## Give the Gift of Listening

by Pete deLisser

A year ago, a human resource executive requested a two-hour session with me to evaluate my possible use to coach her president in listening skills. Within thirty minutes, I asked her, "Did you ever take a skill course in listening?" Her response was, "No." "Well, you demonstrate all the fundamentals. How did you learn to listen?" Her reply, "I guess my mother. She always was available to listen to my problems and help me figure out what I wanted to do." *Her mother had given her the gift of listening.*

A different example of learned listening skills was demonstrated by a high-potential manager who was referred to me because "when presenting to senior managers, he waffled and appeared unconfident, especially when answering questions." The reason he gave for his approach was *he was trying to anticipate what answers they wanted.*

His repeated experiences with authority, at home and throughout grade school, junior and senior high school, was to be punished for giving what authority perceived to be the wrong answers. We practiced listening drills which enabled him to answer questions directly and concisely, to clarify unclear questions laden with self-interest, to reduce

strong emotions before responding. In our last session, he joyously described a meeting with senior managers in which he answered all questions directly. "Not only did I get to cover all the information I needed to present by answering their questions, I looked smart doing it." Listening may have turned around a career and solved a lifetime problem.

This kind of focused listening, when under stress, is nothing new. The conductor of a symphony orchestra can focus on the specific notes of the cello in the midst of the concert. A mother can hear a young baby cry and know instantly if the cry is one of joy or pain. The great professional quarterbacks like Joe Montana can

screen out the noise and impending crash of a 300-pound lineman about to hit them to stay focused on a pass receiver 30 yards down the field.

Michael Levine, in his book *The Listening Self*, describes these kinds of listening.

"This *listening to* is a concentrated attention, silent, patient, willing to take time to listen carefully. It is a listening which requires discipline, to avoid being distracted, to stay with a sound long enough to achieve a real familiarity, a certain intimacy."

This *listening to* is a gift we can give

(Continued on page 5)

“  
Listening is the  
perfect gift for the  
person who has never  
been listened to.  
”

## President's Perspective

by Phil Emmert, President

Two items that I consider of importance — and I hope you do too:

**1** I have been reading comments on Listen-2, the Internet listening group (which I recommend to all of you who have access to the Internet). There has been a discussion of the ILA definition of listening and whether or not "response" should be a part of it. I am not going to get into that question in this issue of the *Listening Post*; however, I would like to discuss the responses I have received to my request in the last issue of the *Listening Post* for names and addresses of prospective ILA members.

I first want to thank those of you who have sent in the forms that were included in the last issue (some of which included four or five addresses). I know you were "listening" to my message because you did respond. For everyone else who did not yet respond, let me again urge you to send me the names and addresses of people who you believe would be good prospects to recruit into ILA. I am convinced that ILA can only improve as an organization if we can recruit more good people into the group.

Every organization (and ILA is no exception) needs new people coming into the organization with fresh ideas and energy. They improve the organization simply by becoming part of it and contributing their perspectives. Certainly, it is also true that they make the organization more stable financially. It is also true that members retire and must be replaced.

New members may be even more important, however, in the ways they affect "older" members through their enthusiasm and their ideas. After a while, it is easy for any of us to become tired, or to fall into a rut.

Fortunately, new members in an organization make that harder to happen. I certainly am not suggesting that we are in a rut as an organization. What I saw and heard in Sacramento would suggest anything but that. However, if now and then you find yourself replaying program ideas or ideas for papers for the ILA Convention, or if you find yourself thinking of the same people you have thought of before for offices in ILA or to take on ILA projects, then this is a sign that we need new members.

Please respond to my plea and send me the names and addresses of prospective new ILA members. I will write them and send them ILA materials. Use the enclosed form to send the names and addresses to me. All you need to do is fill out the form and mail it to me. I'll do the rest.

**2** This spring we tried to change Executive Directors, *Listening Post* editors, and the deadline for submission of program and paper proposals for next year's convention — all at the same time. You may have noticed when you received your copy of the *Listening Post* with the convention announcement in it that the deadline had already passed. We are sorry for that. We meant for everyone to have adequate notice, and we also were trying to move the deadline forward in order to make convention planning more manageable. In the past, it really has been difficult to accept program proposals in the fall and still prepare camera-ready copy for the convention program in time to have it mailed out to everyone in time to prepare for the convention. Well, the best laid plans . . . and all that.

We have adjusted the deadline for proposals to August 1. You should have received a postcard announcing this change, but I thought that some reinforcement of that message might not be a bad idea. **SusanEllen Bacon**, our First Vice President, is awaiting proposals for papers and programs

for the 1997 convention. Send something to her and plan to attend the convention in Mobile March 13-15. I am somewhat familiar with Mobile, and I believe we should have a great time at this meeting. And we all need to get to work and submit proposals so that SusanEllen will have something to put together for us. Remember, the convention program begins with each of us.

## Editor's Ink

by Barbara B. Nixon



In the last issue of the *Listening Post*, I mentioned feeling like Dr. Seuss' Bartholomew Cubbins with all the hats I'm wearing lately. . . . In this issue, I'd like to talk briefly about my hat as the Webmaster for ILA.

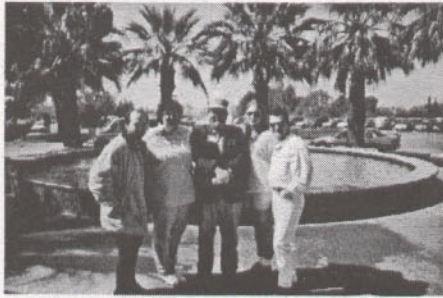
The ILA website has slowly but surely been picking up steam. I spent the better part of a recent weekend updating the work that **Todd Thomas** began several months ago. Now when you visit the website, you will find:

- ◆ About ILA — a brief description of our organization
- ◆ Membership Directory — links to many members who have e-mail addresses
- ◆ Information on how to join Listen-2, the Internet discussion group devoted to listening
- ◆ Links to communication departments throughout the country
- ◆ Links to other communication associations
- ◆ Link to the *Communication Citation Index*.

By the time you read this issue of the *Listening Post*, you will be able to see the *LP* online, also. I also plan on adding in all the e-mail addresses that appeared in the most recent ILA Directory. Coming soon, you'll find ILA Announcements and the *International Journal of Listening* index.

(Continued on page 6)

# Memories of the 1996 Convention in Sacramento



**Tommy Neuman** and just a few his Angels — to whom we all owe a great deal for the help provided to us in Sacramento. Thanks!



**Dixie Schneider**, with her former professor **Tommy Neuman**, made us all laugh heartily at the luncheon on Saturday



Passing the gavel, literally. Incoming ILA President **Phil Emmert** receives the gavel from outgoing President **Margaret Fitch-Hauser**



**Lisa (Vickers) Darnell** with the 1996 President's Award, presented to her by **Margaret Fitch-Hauser** for her service to ILA



**Kathy Thompson**, with her students **Amy Marciniak** on the left and **Liz Kosler** on the right — their hard work made a smooth convention for us all



**Lydia Comty**, **Nadine Marsnik**, **Harvey Weiss** and **Margaret Fitch-Hauser** listen to their phones at the Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento

## Special thanks. . .

. . . to **Harvey Weiss** for taking photos at the 1996 ILA Convention in Sacramento.



## ILA LISTENING POST Listening Post Deadlines

The deadline for all *Listening Post* materials (including articles, ads, and photographs) to appear in the next issue is **September 30**. Whenever possible, copy should be sent via e-mail or mailed on disk.

## LISTENING POST Advertising

To provide service to ILA members and suppliers, the *ILA Listening Post* will accept advertising. Acceptance of all advertising will be subject to editorial approval.

### 1996 Ad Rates

Full Page	\$250.00
1/2 Page	\$150.00
1/4 Page	\$75.00
1/8 Page	\$40.00

All ads must be camera-ready and pre-paid.

Send materials and ads to:

**Barbara B. Nixon, Editor**  
SPECTRA Inc. Publishers  
P.O. Box 13  
De Pere, WI 54115  
b\_b\_nixon@msn.com  
414-496-4255 voice  
414-337-1972 fax

## Discover Mobile!

by the Mobile Visitors and Conventions Bureau

Mobile, home of ILA's 1997 annual convention, is alive with places to go and people to see. Some attractions you certainly should not miss are:

- ◆ *Battleship USS Alabama Memorial Park.* Explore a mighty battleship, winner of nine battle stars in World War II. Investigate the World War II submarine USS DRUM. See a Mach 3 A-12 Blackbird super-secret spy plane.
- ◆ *Bellingrath Gardens & Home.* Encompassing 65 landscaped acres in the midst of a 905-acre semitropical forest, Bellingrath is magnificent in any season and is one of America's top five gardens. Enjoy the Bellingrath Home and the largest public display of Boehm porcelain in the world. Don't miss the 45-minute river cruise on the Southern Belle.
- ◆ *Fort Condé.* Mobile's official visitor welcome center, this 18th century fort was rebuilt in 1976 following archaeological excavations which recovered numerous artifacts, many of which are on display today.
- ◆ *Mobile Greyhound Park.* This climate controlled multimillion dollar facility offers year-round greyhound racing with pari-mutuel wagering.
- ◆ *Historic House Museums.* It will be difficult to choose between the Bragg-Mitchell Mansion (built in 1855), the Carlen House Museum (built in 1842), Condé-Charlotte House (circa 1822), Oakleigh Period House Museum (1833), and the Richards-DAR House (1860). Visit them all!

And there's more. The Museum of the City of Mobile is a definite must-

## "Simply" Listen?

by Andy Wolvin

At the Sacramento convention, ILA presented Suzy Yehl Marta from Rainbows, an organization headquartered in Chicago, with its coveted "Listener of the Year" award. On accepting the award for Marta, Molly Hawley, one of the Rainbows' directors, told us a moving story of the work of this wonderful organization. And, she said we do this by "simply listening."

I don't know about you, but dismissing listening as "simple" is like running a fingernail on the classroom chalkboard. Chills crawl up my spine every time I hear the description "simply listen" or the admonition "just listen." After 17 years of dedicated research and work to advance the study and practice of good listening, we ILAers have come to recognize that listening is one of the most complex – if not the most complex – of all human behaviors. Listening is hard work. It requires a willingness to listen, sensory acuity, attention energy and focus, active interpretation, and appropriate response. There's no way

see. Enjoy other museums such as the Phoenix Fire Museum, the Mobile Museum of Art, the Exploreum Science Museum, and the Eichold-Heustis Medical Museum. Take a trip with Captain Gene Burrell of Wildland Expeditions into the heart of the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta to learn about early American Indians and see wildlife from alligators to bald eagles.

Downtown Mobile is an historic area where you will see the charms of a graceful city undergoing a lively rejuvenation. Dauphin Street, has unfolded as a downtown hot spot, offering unique places to shop, eat, and enjoy the entertainment. Nightclubs,

that the process of listening can be dismissed as "simple."

I suggest that it's time that ILA launch a campaign to abolish "just" and "simply" as listening descriptors. I can envision bumper stickers and buttons emblazoned with "Just Listen," but with the "just" crossed out. And I hope our listening curriculum can include a classroom discussion with students as to why "just" is an inappropriate modifier of "listen." (One of my favorite final exam questions asks students to confront the issue: "What is wrong with 'just' as a modifier of listening?")



The social construction of reality theory of language tells us that we shape our world through our language. As listening specialists, we ought to construct our own reality. If we don't talk about listening as a passive, simple process anymore, perhaps we can create a new listening culture. In this listening culture, people will take the process seriously and engage in listening willingly and actively. So, please, let's stop dismissing our work as "simply listening," and start creating a world that really does listen.

a renowned candy shop, a tearoom, even a microbrewery-restaurant — this is the place to stroll in the afternoon, dine in the evening, and dance by the light of the moon. Cathedral Square, across from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (a minor basilica), lies just a short distance from many downtown hotels. The park has become the centerpiece of a 14-block arts district. Jazz festivals, art exhibits, a concert series, September celebration, and First Night Mobile, the city's annual New Year's celebration, draw thousands of visitors to the park.

Come to Mobile, where the Bay is just the beginning!

## Gift of Listening

(continued from page 1)

people. Described in a dictionary, a gift is "something given voluntarily, without payment in return, as to honor a person or provide assistance; a present."

I gave this gift to my four-year-old granddaughter as I watched her head drop, her lip start to tremble, and her eyes fill with sadness. Her mother had just refused to let her do something she wanted and did so in an intense, upset tone of voice. I said to my granddaughter in a sad tone of voice, "You look sad." Without looking up, she nodded her head. "It really hurts when your mother yells at you." Again her head bobbed up and down. Then I said, "What can you do that would be fun?" Her head snapped up, a creative thought flashed in her eyes, a smile broke across her face, and she said, "I'll go watch Barney."

In seconds, her focus changed from past events to future possibilities. In seconds, she solved her own problem. In seconds, listening helped her be open to change.

Why is it that people so infrequently give us this gift, this gift that has the power to help us learn, to open us to change? They don't give it to us because, as Heidegger says, "It requires a very artful and complete modification of attitude in order to hear a pure noise."

One modification of attitude is our concept of time. As Stephen Covey says, "People do not listen with intent to understand. They listen with intent to reply." We listen then in linear and irreversible time. We urgently need to move forward. We respond to what someone said with intent on the next step. But in truth Walter Benjamin made a revolutionary distinction of what real listening is: "Listening is when time past is recalled." Statements like "You look sad" and

"It really hurts when someone yells at you" combine the past with the moment; they have no anticipation of the future, no urgency to get on with the conversation. It is a moment when time stops long enough for us to hear ourselves, to sigh with a sense of freedom, to think "Thank God someone heard me."

Another modification of attitude is to recognize listening as a demonstration of character. It is a moral struggle to become one who listens for *the truth*. Why would a high-potential manager want to listen if he expected his answers to only bring punishment? As Carl Rogers said, "The risk of being changed is one of the most frightening prospects most of us face." Moral people like this manager are courageous listeners, willing to consider alternatives, alternatives which are *the truth* and possibly not to their liking.

Most of us were never given the gift of listening. We learned listening the "old fashioned way," by not being listened to. We know what it feels like to be interrupted repeatedly in the middle of a sentence, to be told that children are to be seen and not heard. This lack of listening taught us the need to talk through, over and around people so that we can be heard. It is not surprising that 75% of executives have been trained in speaking skills, while 5% have taken a skill course in listening. Our business experience is "whoever draws the first breath is declared the listener."

However, the tide has turned. Global competition is forcing us into teams. Total Quality Management is the rage. Managers spend well over 50% of their time in meetings listening for new ideas, listening to make new changes. The problem is very few hear anything new or make new changes because they don't know how to listen to the truth. Jon Katzenbach in *The Wisdom of Teams* says that high-performance

teams are rare because along with a high-performance standard, they require team members to have a "high degree of personal commitment to each other." That's difficult without the gift of listening.

Listening is the perfect gift for the person who has never been listened to. We know every child loves it. We know it helps managers keep their careers on track.

What will it do for you?



### IMPORTANT DATES

**August 1, 1996** — Submit proposals for 1997 Convention:

SusanEllen Bacon  
2640 Homewood  
Troy, MI 48098  
810-641-8160 (fax/phone)

**August 15, 1996** — Submit nominations for 1997 ILA Officers:

Richard D. Halley (Dick)  
6841 Forestview Dr.  
Columbia, MO 65202

**September 30, 1996** — *Listening Post* deadline (articles & ads)

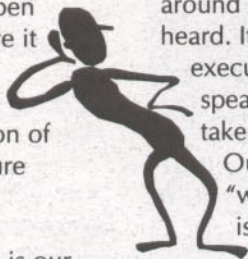
**October 5, 1996** — Mid-South Regional ILA Conference

**October 26, 1996** — Third Annual Midwest Regional Conference

**February 1, 1997** — Submit research papers for consideration for Brown and Nichols Awards

**March 13-15, 1997** — 18th Annual Convention to be held in Mobile, AL

**March 19-21, 1998** — 19th Annual Convention to be held in Kansas City, MO





## Call for Papers

by Ethel Glenn

The International Listening Association, in conjunction with the Institute for the Study of Intrapersonal Processes (ISIP), each year offers awards for the three outstanding research papers presented at the annual convention. The research award is named for and honors Professor **Ralph G. Nichols**, whose research in the 1940s and 1950s provided the basis for much of the subsequent study of listening.

A cash prize of \$1,000 is given to the author of the top paper, with second and third place winners receiving \$100 and \$25. The first place check is one of the largest cash amounts given in recognition of research by any of the communication-related professional associations.

Many presenters at the 1996 convention in Sacramento failed to submit their papers for consideration prior to the deadline. In the past, papers were accepted up through the first day of the convention. Beginning in 1995, a February 1 deadline was established. Although the deadline has now been in place for two years, some authors still have not programmed the date into their writing plans. The earlier deadline became a necessity when ISIP Board members, who read and evaluate the papers, found themselves spending most of the convention sitting in their hotel rooms reading. Convention planners and ISIP Board members do not want any presenter to be excluded from consideration, but the deadline must and will be adhered to.

Some people have asked about guidelines for the decision making.

The papers should conform to customary research guidelines – that is, they should be wither theory-building or data-based studies. Pieces that are purely applied, such as new exercises to teach listening, will be considered only if they present and develop a solid theoretical foundation. Readers look for papers that combine established, properly documented research with original thinking. For data-based studies, the suitability and accurate use of statistical analysis is important. The types of studies may be experimental, descriptive, or documentary. The primary question *Does the study make a significant contribution to the field of listening?* guides the decision making.

Guidelines are as follows:

- ◆ the recipient must be an ILA member.
- ◆ three copies of the completed paper must be submitted to the award coordinator by February 1 of the award year.
- ◆ the top three papers will be

presented alphabetically during a Ralph G. Nichols Award Program at the convention.

- ◆ the Award Program will be sponsored jointly by the ILA Research Committee and ISIP.
- ◆ the award will be announced at the ILA convention banquet.
- ◆ the award chair will coordinate the award for two years.
- ◆ the winning paper should be submitted to the *International Journal of Listening*.

Papers should be sent to:

Ethel Glenn, Award Coordinator  
1802 Walker Avenue  
Greensboro, NC 27403  
910-273-6772  
GlennEC@IRIS.UNCG.EDU

Remember to submit your papers for consideration. Remember the deadline: **February 1, 1997.**



## New ILA Members

Please welcome the following members to the International Listening Association. If you see someone from your area, give him or her a call. (Due to space constraints, it is not possible to list each new member's complete address with phone number. If your local phone book or directory assistance does not have the phone number, you can call the Executive Director for address details.)

George T. Anton, Evanston, IL  
Leslie Appling, Clovis, NM  
Hal D. Bartholomew, JD, Sacramento, CA  
Muffy Berryhill, Whitmore, CA  
Susan Budvitis, Carol Stream, IL  
Karen Carrier, Malvern, PA  
Laura Chasin, Cambridge, MA  
Faye Christensen, Mobile, AL  
Dennis G. Diede, Elk Grove, CA  
Suzanne Dow, Burke, VA  
Penny Ann Fox, Clairmont, CA  
Joan Freitag, Springfield, IL  
Dr. Federico Gianni, Milano, Italy  
Lt. Gary Gregson, Sacramento, CA  
Bernadine Hamilton, Sacramento, CA  
Greg Heard, Placerville, CA  
William Heslin, New Brighton, MN

Eleanor Hyatt, Hopkins, MN  
Faith Johnson, New Orleans, LA  
Ronald Johnson, Antelope, CA  
Shirley Kraft, Morristown, NJ  
Amy Marciniak, South Milwaukee, WI  
James McCroskey, Morgantown, WV  
Art Nauman, Sacramento, CA  
Brenda Olson, Sacramento, CA  
Dixie Schneider, Fair Oaks, CA  
Tom "Tucker" Simms, Chicago, IL  
Douglas Strachan, Victoria, BC, Canada  
Chuck Tilton, Des Plaines, IL  
Kerry Vann, Citrus Heights, CA  
Thomas Walpole, Bowman, CA  
Diane E. Wasznicky, Sacramento, CA  
Karen Williamson, Orangevale, CA  
Roger Wilson, Roanoke, VA

## Mid-South Regional ILA Conference

### **Beyond Memory: Assessing Other Aspects of Listening**

The Mid-South Regional ILA Conference is scheduled for October 5, 1996, in Nashville, TN. Details for the exact location, schedule, costs, etc., will be forthcoming. We hope to make this a working session with perhaps some presentations. Costs will be kept to a minimum, and Nashville should be beautiful in October.

We are considering the topic *Beyond Memory: Assessing Other Aspects of Listening*. Now that we are working on assimilating listening competencies lists, we could begin to explore how we will assess other aspects of listening competency than the listener remembers of what was said. Please let either **Sheila Bentley** or **Lisa (Vickers) Darnell** know if you are interested in attending, and we will put you on the mailing list.

### **Errata**



**Kelby K. Halone**, from the University of Oklahoma, is a co-author on the 1996 Nichols Award Second Place paper, "Perceptions of Listening Ability Across the Life Span: Implica-

tions for Understanding Listening Competencies." **Carolyn Gwynn Coakley** and **Andrew Wolvin** share the award. Kelby's name was inadvertently left off the awards list in the last issue of the *Listening Post*.

Nichols Award paper submissions should be sent to **Ethel Glenn** by February 1, 1997. See related story on page 7 of this issue of the *Listening Post*.



### **News & Notes**

**Tom Wirkus** was recently re-elected to a third four-year term on the Board of the Wisconsin Public Radio Association. The WPRB Board represents more than 39,000 contributing members of the Association.

**Wayne Bond, Judi Brownell, Carole Grau** and **Andy Wolvin** presented a panel on Corporate Listening Training at the recent Eastern Communication Association convention in New York City. **Debbie Borisoff**, ECA First Vice President, was responsible for planning the convention.

**Mary Bozik** has been selected Chair of the Faculty for 1996-1997 at the University of Northern Iowa.

**Lisa Vickers**, former *Listening Post* Editor, wed Jeffrey Darnell on May 16 in Daviston, Alabama. Her new address and phone number are:

Lisa Darnell  
PO Box 3041  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35662  
205-314-0300

**L. Todd Thomas** has accepted the position of corporate trainer at Rockwell International in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Harvey Weiss** is teaching a continuing professional education class this summer for the University of St. Thomas. The course is titled "Lend Me Your Ear — A K-12 Listening Skills Workshop."

**lis•ten•ing** *n* (1996):  
the process of receiving,  
constructing meaning from,  
and responding to spoken and/  
or nonverbal messages

Seek  
first  
to understand,  
then  
to be understood.

—Stephen R. Covey  
*The 7 Habits of Highly  
Effective People*



### **IMPORTANT ADDRESSES**

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