



LISTENING POST

ISSUE No. SIXTY • SPRING 1997

Send a Message by Listening Well

by Diane Stafford
Kansas City Star

Whether you're in a job interview or a workplace meeting, you'll score points though effective communication.

Some people think communicating well means having the gift of gab. That's true. A good command of the language and clear, smooth delivery give you an advantage over co-workers or job competitors who lack them.

It's pretty easy to find and enroll in speech classes at area community colleges if you want to spiff up your speaking skills. You can even join speech clubs or hire private trainers.

But talking is only one part of communicating. The equally important—and frequently forgotten—part of any two-way exchange is listening.

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Observations of a First-Timer

by Daryl Vander Kooi

After attending my first ILA conference and reading some of the resulting messages on Listen-2, I would like to give a few observations from my perspective.

I have known about ILA for many years since my colleagues (**Charles Veenstra** and **Marty Dekkenga**) have been members for many years. I learned through them. However, with an increasing dislike of the SCA politics and loneliness, I decided to join ILA, and I am pleased that I did for several reasons. First, this group is friendly, understanding, and personable. In SCA, one can be lost unless friends from other institutions also attend. Second, ILA does not appear to have its inner circles, its cliques. All are taken in. All members deliberately seek out the new members or strangers. Third, ILA doesn't have that "professional" bent to try to impress others with knowledge, academic ladder-climbing, or professional status. In fact, I felt a bit strange for having "Dr." before my full name. I was thankful that it

appeared in small print. Finally, you people are genuinely interested in others lives—their health, their stresses, their birthdays (for you Ralph Nichols and Tom Hickerson), etc. In sum, I was impressed by the atmosphere.

Now, would you grant some other observations? At Mobile, I heard a number of calls for increasing the size of the membership. I can understand the pressures to increase. A larger membership would reduce the "burn out" of members. A larger membership would presumably increase visibility. A larger membership might increase credibility especially if one seeks to influence political bodies who are setting standards for educational programs. However, I question the need to increase the size of the organization. First, the personal character would slowly decline if the numbers get too high. Second, Americans tend to assume that bigger is better. However, we learned during the gas crunch that bigger was worse. We might want to examine our tendencies. For

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President's Perspective

Looking to the Future: A Presidential View

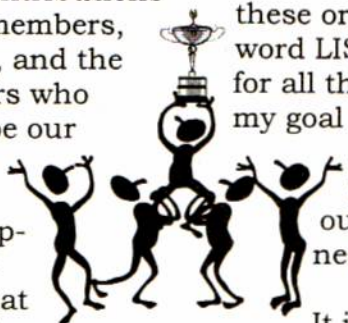
by SusanEllen Bacon, Ph.D.

Last month in Mobile, Alabama, we gathered at the 18th annual convention of the International Listening Association. The theme of the convention was *Celebrate the Past and Look to the Future*. We sang "Happy 90th Birthday" to Ralph Nichols, the father of modern listening. We recognized the contributions of our founding members, our life members, and the executive directors who have helped shape our future.

We also had an opportunity to celebrate the ways that the membership has contributed to our organization, ways that we have shared our "news." ILA is made up of people representing not only different professional fields but also distinct arenas of professional expertise. Our "news" has been shared by those who research, publish articles, write books, create public service announcement, design posters, staff boutiques, impact ILA internationally, create web sites, reach out to new members, hold regional meetings, teach and consult.

Listening impacts the corporate world, permeates the learning organization, and is integral to education, brainstorming, facilitating, customer service, to medicine, politics, and poetry. What we know and do is significant, beneficial, and has impact.

As we look to the future, it is vital that we continue to share our "news." We must "keep spreading the word." There are as many ways to let the world think "listen" as there are individual members in ILA. Recently I had an opportunity to visit the offices of three major corporations in the Detroit area. **Each** of these organizations had the word LISTEN boldly featured for all the world to see. It is my goal to spread the word about ILA to the management of these outstanding businesses.



It is your challenge to spread the news about listening and about ILA in your own arena and in your own way. You can:

- ◆ Hang a poster
- ◆ Send a press release
- ◆ Build a partnership with the media
- ◆ Provide listening tips to a newsletter
- ◆ Invite someone to a regional meeting
- ◆ Write an article
- ◆ Give a speech
- ◆ Submit a proposal to the 1998 ILA Convention with a colleague who has never attended before
- ◆ Tell a friend.

Together we can spread the news...because what we know is too good not to share!

 **Editor's Ink**
by Barbara B. Nixon

It hardly seems as though a year has passed since I began in my role as *Listening Post* editor. I recall the words of advice that the past editor, **Lisa Darnell**, gave me: "It's a fun job, except for about two weeks out of every quarter." I'm beginning to understand her statement more as time goes along. The two weeks right after deadline time are quite crazy, mainly because (ahem) only a few articles make it in before the deadline of each issue. For those of you who get your articles in before the deadline, I say, THANK YOU. (Yes, I did intend to shout that!)

In the past year, the ILA's online presence has grown quite a bit. Our website (<http://www.listen.org>) attracts at least a handful of people every day. And there are now nearly 100 people, both members and non-members, who participate in the online discussion group LISTEN-2. (For directions on how to join this discussion group, please visit our website.) Take a few moments and visit the website. . . I'd love your feedback about its new look! My e-mail address is b_b_nixon@msn.com.

Would you like to see the *Listening Post* online, either instead of or in addition to the printed version? Just let me know!

Let's keep in touch throughout the year—and not just during the "crunch times."

Mardi Gras, ILA-Style, Awards Banquet

by Lisa Darnell
Member-at-Large,
Public Relations

Convention attendees gathered on the Mezzanine with their listening ears and their Mardi Gras masks to attend the annual Awards Banquet. Numerous awards were presented at the banquet by ILA, ISIP (the Institute for the Study of Intrapersonal Processes) and by outgoing ILA President, **Phil Emmert**.

The first award for the evening was for the best Cocktail Hour Mask. The award, Moon Pies and the book *'Scuse Me While I Kiss this Guy* (a book about misheard song lyrics) were given to **Beverly Aweve** for her original creation of an ILA Mardi Gras mask. The judges decided that Bev's mask, which featured pins and buttons about ILA and listening, best represented ILA and its mission.

ILA also presented the following awards during the banquet:

Undergraduate Research Award, Stephanie Guild, the University of North Alabama. Stephanie Guild's paper, "The Effects of Active Listening in Casual Conversation" was chosen as the recipient of the ILA Undergraduate Research Award.

Graduate Thesis/Research Award, Patricia L. Book, Arizona State University. Patricia L. Book received the

Graduate Thesis/Research Award for her thesis entitled "Implications of Effective Listening Responses for Interaction with Alzheimer Patients."

Special Recognition, Charles H. "Chuck" Swanson and Wisconsin Public Radio. Chuck Swanson was one of this year's recipients of the ILA Special Recognition Award. Those chosen for this award have given outstanding or unusual service to the ILA and/or to promote listening. Not only has Swanson been active within the organization, but also he has been making presentations across the country to promote the mission of ILA—more effective listeners. In addition, his nomination information mentions the sense of fun and humor that Swanson brings to the ILA. Perhaps best known for his "Poor Listener Excuses" t-shirts, Swanson recently ended his term as Member-At-Large, Public Relations. During his tenure, Swanson worked to be certain select members of Congress knew about ILA and the importance of listening.

Wisconsin Public Radio also received an ILA Special Recognition Award. Wisconsin Public Radio has proved to be an advocate of both more competent listeners, and of the ILA. The non-profit organization has featured then ILA Executive Director Kathy Thompson and President Phil Emmert during call-in talk shows. In addition, public radio personality



Kathleen Dunn was the keynote speaker at this year's Midwest Regional Conference.

Hall of Fame, Harvey Weiss. As a charter member of ILA, **Harvey Weiss** has been with ILA since its inception. He has continued to be active in ILA, presenting at most annual conferences and holding numerous

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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 June 30.

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.

1997 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

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b_b_nixon@msn.com
414-721-6315 voice
414-337-1972 fax

Speakers' & Writers' Resource List

by Lisa Darnell
Member-at-Large,
Public Relations

Have you ever thought about appearing on a radio or television talk show to discuss listening, but were afraid you might not have the answers for the questions that might be asked? Or maybe you've considered allowing yourself to be interviewed for your local newspaper for an article about the importance of listening, but weren't sure you could remember all the important information necessary for the interview?

If so, the Public Relations Committee is working to address your fears, and we need your help. Members of the Public Relations Committee are working to compile a "factoid" list to send to all ILA members that would aid them in answering questions that the media might ask, such as do businesses really need to train their management to listen? The answer: certainly, because managers spend up to 60% of their day listening.

Having answers such as the one above at your fingertips would help take some of the pressure off of an interview situation. However, the Public Relations Committee needs your help compiling our list.

Perhaps you have some interesting factoids, such as

- ♦ only one out of five students really know how to listen, or

- ♦ a 1991 a study involving college students showed that more than 65% of their day is spent listening, or
- ♦ listening to another person gives same-day service.

Please write down your favorite listening factoids and send them to **Lisa Darnell** at ldarnell@unanov.una.edu or Box 5189, Florence, AL 35632.

ILA Represented at Iowa Tech Prep Conference

ILA has been invited to present a session at the state wide meeting of the Iowa Tech Prep Conference as a result of the efforts of our new members from Sioux City, Iowa.

The meeting on April 21-22 is expected to attract 1500-2000 middle and secondary school teachers from across the state of Iowa. **Melissa Beall**, veteran ILA member and long-time secondary teacher, now at University of Northern Iowa, will represent ILA by presenting a session on "How to Teach Listening." She will distribute ILA materials to those in attendance, including information on the next convention in Kansas City.

Awards

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offices in the ILA. In addition to his contributions to the ILA, Weiss has also been active in the listening field. He developed a full-semester high school course, "Effective Listening," which has been taught at his school since 1972. Weiss edited and published *Effective Listening Quarterly*, the first newsletter/journal devoted exclusively to listening, and has conducted numerous seminars and workshops through his consulting company named Lend Me Your Ear.

Listener of the Year, Bryant Gumbel. Gumbel was chosen as Listener of the Year for his years of dedicated listening during his tenure on NBC's *Today Show*. In addition, on his last day with the *Today* show, Gumbel appeared on *Oprah*. During his interview with Oprah Winfrey, Gumbel mentioned the key for young people who were trying to break into broadcasting was to work on their communication skills—specifically, their listening skills.

Your 1997 Board

President	SusanEllen Bacon
First Vice-President	Janet Cherry
First Vice-President Elect	Charles Roberts
Second Vice-President	Tommy Neuman
Members at Large	Carol Christy Edie Cole Lisa Darnell
Listening Post Editor & Secretary	Barbara Nixon
Executive Director	Diana Schnapp

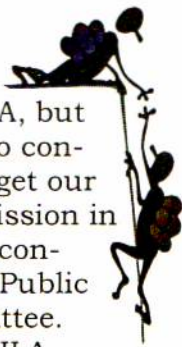
The Public Relations Committee Needs You

by Lisa Darnell
Member-at-Large,
Public Relations

If you support ILA, but realize we need to continue to work to get our name and our mission in the public's eye, consider joining the Public Relations Committee. According to the ILA Membership Directory, ILA's purpose is to "promote the study, development, and teaching of effective listening in all settings." Members of the committee met at the ILA Convention in Mobile to establish goals and objectives for the coming year, to help further the purpose of ILA. Some of these objectives are already being met, but others will require the joint effort of a committed team of people.

Don't worry about being asked to do too much; we understand that committees cease to be effective if you over-burden their members.

We have established reasonable, reachable goals and objectives, that, when divided among a team, will allow ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results.



So join the winning team, and let's work together to further the mission of the ILA. If you are interested in joining the Public Relations Committee, contact **Lisa Darnell** at Box 5189, Florence, AL 35632 or ldarnell@unanov.una.edu.

Listening Well

(continued from page 1)

I once met a business consultant who thought listening was so important that he had the word "listen" embroidered on all of his shirt cuffs. A mite extreme. . . but sound advice.

Here are some specific suggestions for better listening:

- ◆ Maintain eye contact with the person who's talking.
- ◆ Pay attention. Don't spend the other person's airtime composing your response in your head. Don't assume you know what the other person is saying.
- ◆ Occasionally ask a question. Paraphrase and repeat what you heard.
- ◆ Control your body language. Don't fidget while the other person has the floor.

- ◆ If the conversation includes an exchange of information, write things down. Don't bury your head, but from time to time jot some quick notes.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat something, to speak more loudly or to slow down.

Will following these recommendations guarantee a job or a promotion? Of course not. But they'll help. You'll learn more by listening better. And you'll develop a rapport.

Who wouldn't be flattered by an intense listener? Accord the same flattery to others, and you will score interpersonal points. That's the biggest career edge you can have.

Article reprinted with permission from the *Kansas City Star*. Diane Stafford's careers column appears on Sundays. Send column ideas to her at *The Star* Business desk, 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108 or send an e-mail message to stafford@kcstar.com.



IMPORTANT DATES

May 31, 1997 — Submit proposals for next year's convention to Janet Cherry

June 30, 1997 — *Listening Post* deadline

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

A Bright Idea



Fliers advertising the ILA convention in Kansas City, March 19-21, 1998, are available from Diana Schnapp, Executive Director. The fliers have a detachable section readers can send in to be put on the mailing list for the convention. Requests for fliers can be phoned, faxed, or e-mailed to Diana at the office.

First-Timer

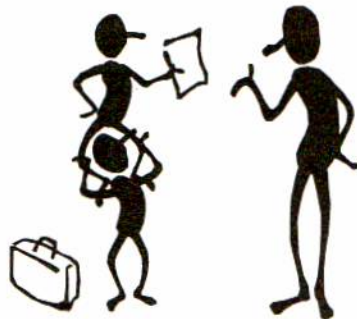
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example, I am a member of one organization that has a smaller membership than ILA, yet it has placed itself in a strategic position to influence some of the bills in Washington, D.C. In other words, it might not be so much a matter of size as it is a matter of strategy. Also, regarding "burn out," I might suggest making use of new or quieter members. Oops, that's me! The "old timers" might consider a time in the convention to sit down with new members to learn about their talents/abilities and then encourage them to use those talents. The options are joint papers, support for research by networking the new with the "old," etc. (If all goes well, I will also try something for next year. Yes, Janet, I'll send it your way.)

Another observation—it appears to me that the major emphasis has been very practical, if not pragmatic. We have been learning about listening, but the pressure of teaching and of establishing criteria in state educational bodies has pushed us into pedagogy and politics with a spirit of "tell me what I can use" or "tell me what works." I understand that pressure. I also have that internal bent. Such direction, however, does leave us open to criticism. We do seem to be going in the opposite direction of SCA. SCA for the theory; ILA for the practice. ILA might wish to encourage one or more sectionals that will attempt to press the theoretical front. (Remember, this is

from a newcomer.) For example, if the function of communication is to make relationships concrete, existent, real, then what does that have to say about listening? Or, what affect might post-modernism have on listening? on ethics in listening? What does (de)constructivism do to our understanding of and use of listening?

Or, let's try another—what does "International" mean in ILA? What effect might modern communication technology have on the international aspect of ILA? Can ILA truly be international without extreme costs to those that could use its expertise? its conventions?



Finally, what is listening? I don't ask the question to be cute or nasty. For example, I thought I detected an assumption that listening was an extremely important part of communication, but that it was strictly the counterpart of hearing. While many persons talked about the visual, I don't really recall anyone clearly indicating that one listens with more than the ears. Can we call visual reception listening? Can I call touch listening? I might be walking where angels fear to tread. I know that some members struggled long to complete a definition of listening. Does that definition preclude visual? I have no difficulty with developing a working definition and using it to limit one's research and academic discussion, but does that also limit the organization itself?

Well, enough from a newcomer. I thank all for a wonderful time and an enlightening experience in Mobile.

ILA Boutique

Missed the convention?

Went to the convention, but forgot to stop by the ILA Boutique in the Book Display Room?
Need ILA merchandise, such as notepads, quote books, canvas bags, keychains?
12 Bumpers

Then Edie Cole, AKA "The Bag Lady," is the one to call!

For ILA Boutique items, please call Edie Cole at 614-486-8876.

From Diana's Desk

by Diana Schnapp
Executive Director

The convention in Mobile has come and gone, but it is still very much on my mind. First of all, thanks to everyone who came, especially to those who presented. The Executive Board and committee chairs did a wonderful job in managing the challenges of this year's meeting.

Just as we have fond memories (and lots of follow-up work!) from this year's convention, so we already look to next year in Kansas City. Your officers are listening to you in an effort to improve our annual meeting by making it more economical and professionally rewarding. In a short time, you will be receiving a questionnaire from the officers seeking your input about how to better meet your needs and desires during the convention. Please respond promptly to that survey. Some exciting ideas may become reality as early as this fall.

On another note, let me encourage you to update your addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses. We are near the time of year when the new directory is to be published, and you will want to be sure your friends and colleagues can reach you. Plus, did you know that it costs ILA money every time we do not have a correct address or phone number? Returned letters, newsletters, journals, e-mails, and long-distance calls that go astray



add up. Please send me updates right away of any changes and of any ideas you have for improving our new directory: size, format, type of information to include. Ideas in writing will be the easiest to consider.

Congratulations to the new officers. You have an effective combination of veterans and "new blood" to lead our organization this coming year.

Have you renewed your membership? Within the next month, individuals whose membership is not up to date as of March of this year will be dropped from the membership rolls. As of now, your membership expiration date should be sometime after April 1, 1997. If it is any earlier, your membership is outdated, and you are in danger of being dropped from the directory and from mailing lists. We don't want to lose any of our members! Check your renewal date and join us for an exciting year ahead.

Remember you can e-mail now to ILISTENING@aol.com.

Keeping in Touch Year-Round

Still psyched-up from the convention in Mobile? Don't want to let your enthusiasm dwindle until we see each other again in Kansas City next year? Join LISTEN-2, an e-mail discussion group! See <http://www.listen.org> for details on joining.

A Thank You from Tom

by Tom Hickerson

I thank the more than 60 ILA members who celebrated my 50th birthday with me. Your presence—along with your warmth, cards, songs, gifts, and toasts—made this birthday a pleasant happening rather than a gloomy reckoning.

I can't imagine my transition to "semi-centennial" with a more caring and more enjoyable association of people.

A heartfelt thank you also to "Tom's angels"—Carolyn, Susie, and Kimberly—for arranging for the "toast," which Andy Wolvin has referred to as "one of the most enjoyable ILA events ever."



"To Tom" — final stanza

by Ethel Glenn

To, Tom, live it up!
Make your bloom a perennial,
And enjoy today,
Your semi-centennial!

What, no photos?

Due to technical difficulties (new computer and old scanner don't know how to talk to each other yet), the convention photos will appear in the Summer edition of the *Listening Post*. Thank you for your understanding.

Barbara B. Nixon
Editor

News & Notes

Mary Bozik, University of Northern Iowa, has been appointed to the Educational Policies Board of the National Communication Association, (formerly the SCA). The seven-member board is responsible for initiating and implementing educational policies for the 7,000+ member organization.

Susan Strack Vargo received a Teaching Excellence Recognition Award (TERA) from Indiana University for her teaching of "Listening Dynamics in Business." It came with a cash award of \$1000.00! Susan also will present (with A. Jawary and C. Birchak) the paper "Groups, Technology, and Intercultural Exchange: An International Initiative" at the Integrating Technology into Computer Science Education Conference, Uppsala, Sweden, June 1997.



Visit the newly redesigned
ILA website online at
<http://www.listen.org>

Hosting provided by Green Bay Online

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

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Call for Proposals

by Janet Cherry
First Vice-President



Help me make our 1998 ILA Conference the best yet! Be a promoter—be a presenter—be a part of planning our 1998 Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, March 19–21.

Great conferences are the result of many factors, and a key ingredient is programming. Ten proposals were submitted for the 1998 Conference while we were still in Mobile, and two followed in the mail.

The May 31 deadline will be honored. Put a note on your calendar. . . tape the proposal form to your bathroom mirror. . . do whatever it takes to remind yourself that **MAY 31** is the date to remember.

Use the form inserted in this *Listening Post* and make copies of it to give to your professional associates. Keep one for yourself, complete it, staple, stamp, and mail. That's all there is to it.

I'll be expecting to hear from you by mail or fax (901-683-2573) by May 31, 1997.

Listening is
a primitive act of love
in which a person
gives himself
to another's word,
making himself
accessible
and
vulnerable
to that word.

—William Stringfellow



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