



NYS AFLT NEWS

New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, Inc.

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The President's Corner

"Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, c'est pire qu'en Afrique"...the words of the French governess Mademoiselle Dombreuil echoed in my ears as I finished re-reading Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Il gattopardo*. All the while, realizing how our area of studies allows us to appreciate extraordinary literary masterpieces in their original version, I cannot but value the ability we have to interact with people from around the world, and enjoy the richness of their cultures that we have embraced and that have become extensions of our own sets of values and traditions.

Looking back at the summer that is now behind us, we may find ourselves assessing what we accomplished, trying to gauge how close we came to achieving the goals set at the beginning of our well-deserved vacation. No doubt, the list is long, but it's safe to say that very close to the top was the intent to re-energize ourselves: to take long walks on the beach or along a cool, shaded



Paul Sabatino

path in the woods and let the surf or a gurgling stream remind us of other times and places, people and voices, and flavors and fragrances that transcend time and space.

We LOTE teachers are fortunate. We are able to communicate in other languages and appreciate the richness of other cultures. We are ambassadors who travel the world with the conviction that our contributions cannot but make the world a better place. Few other areas of studies can provide the cultural stepping stones that build bridges over chasms of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. We know, intuitively, that all individuals have a yearning to connect to other people, to share interesting tidbits with

others, to compare and thus arrive at a better understanding of them and of ourselves.

Poor Mademoiselle Dombreuil will be forever overwhelmed by the oppressive summer heat of Sicily as she gazes at the countryside from the window of the stagecoach that is taking the family of Prince Fabrizio Salina to his beloved childhood town of Donnafugata. Unable to adapt to the temporary discomfort, she despairs under the unrelenting midday sun while losing sight of what is unfolding right before her eyes. Unlike the governess, we are the enthusiastic observers and eager participants of customs and lore who desire nothing less than to become part of the culture that surrounds us, just outside the window, waiting for us to embrace it, accept the inherently natural differences, and absorb all its wonders.

Hopefully, summer gives us the time to reflect and return to our own respective Donnafugata, where nothing awaits other than what we lived and experienced with the heart of the child whose summer days were always endless and carefree, and no experience was not worth the adventure within. That child has never left us, and we will always look forward to our summers with the enthusiasm of the adventure that awaits us just around the next bend.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I invite you to

embrace the culture of the new school year and share with your students the wonderful experiences of the summer that just ended: the excitement generated during your travel experiences, the suitcase overflowing with souvenirs you brought back to show to your classes, the people you met and the new friends you made, the myriad activities that occupied your days...These, like Marcel Proust's petite madeleine trempée dans la tasse de thé are the contents of our existential baggage that defines us as world language and culture teachers: fortunate individuals, indeed, who are able to renew these exciting moments, while at the same time create the future Donnafugata of so many young minds.

NYS AFLT, with its many resources, is very much like Prince Salina's summer refuge. It is a fixed point of reference for what a language teacher needs throughout the year. It is where we find the comfort of professional and personal friendships; where we renew our own resources via the invaluable networking during the many local, regional, and state events sponsored throughout the year. How many colleagues have we met who have since become life-long friends? How many workshops have we attended that honed our classroom methodology? How much classroom-ready material have we brought back that made our Mondays some of the most exciting days of the

week for us and for our students? Ask a colleague who has attended the Spring Colloquium, the Summer Institute, or the Annual Meeting, and you will hear the reasons for you to promise to yourself that not one more year will go by without your registering and participating in these important events. Why not invite other members of your department, a friend, who may have never attended, to join you at our next major event, the Annual Meeting, scheduled during the October 10-12 weekend in beautiful Saratoga Springs? It's not too late to register. Visit our website www.nysafl.org and you will find all the necessary information. We also provide certificates of attendance, attesting to a variable number of professional development hours. Check with your school to make sure that these activities are accepted toward the required number of individual PD hours.

I look forward to seeing you in Saratoga Springs in October. I want to hear about your travel experiences and vicariously enjoy the many places you visited, the sites you explored, the people you met, and the cool spots you discovered that will forever be part of your existential repertory. And I, too, will share with you that which I discovered and that has made, for me, all the difference in the world.

Annual Meeting 2008

Saratoga Hilton and Saratoga
City Conference Center
October 10 – 12, 2008

Teaching Languages in a Changing World: Rethinking Literacies and Learners

Get ready! Get set! Go! If you haven't yet, register now for the 2008 Annual Meeting! As you may already know, this year's conference will be keynoted by **Dr. Robert D. Peckham (Tennessee Bob of FLTEACH fame)**, Professor of French at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Dr. Peckham will be presenting a pre-conference workshop on Friday afternoon.

For the first time this year, two of our technology-related pre-conference sessions on Friday will be held off-site in nearby BOCES computer labs. Register early to save your seat, as space will be limited. Pre-conference sessions are generally capped at 35.

Attention Spanish teachers and other lovers of Latin music! **Justo Lamas**, winner of this year's NYSAFLT National Culture through the Arts Award, will be performing a short concert after the awards banquet on Saturday evening. Bring your dancing shoes! The concert will be followed by our traditional international music and light extravaganza, organized by DJ Webmaster **Ken Hughes**.

If you've never been to the most extensive professional event for NYS LOTE teachers, here are a few things you should know:

- Over 100 outstanding workshops will be offered from Friday through Sunday by top-notch presenters from around New York State and beyond!
- Topics include: advocacy, assessment, culture, curriculum, diversity/learner variables, FLES, instructional materials/textbooks, methods/techniques, technology, and much, much more!
- Basic conference registration includes six 75 minute workshops (four on Saturday and two on Sunday).
- This year, we will be offering a new 'day rate' for Sunday-only attendees. See registration form for details.
- You may also wish to register for a pre- and or post-conference workshop. These three hour, in-depth workshops are ticketed (\$40), and pre-registration is required.
- Although many workshops are not language-specific and are of general interest, many are language-specific. This year's program offers workshops for teachers of Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese and Russian.
- A preliminary listing of all workshops is available on our website – start planning your conference schedule early so that you don't miss anything!
- Certificates of attendance will be available for the number of hours you complete (signa-

tures from presenters required). Check with your school district regarding eligibility for in-service credit.

- Hotel and meals are not included in conference registration. If you register to stay at the conference hotel, meals are included in your package. Three meals are included with each night of your stay at the hotel: dinner, breakfast and lunch.
- If you can share a room with a colleague, register at the double rate and save!
- **All registration materials are available online. There will be no further conference registration mailings this year.**
- Don't forget to bring some spending money – there will be several raffles to benefit our scholarship funds, as well as an exhibit hall full of vendors with something for everyone's tastes and professional needs!
- If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at hq@nysaflt.org.

Summer Institute

The 2008 Summer Institute, organized by co-chairs **Jen Berie, Sue Hochmuth and Swaz Piron**, was held at SUNY Oneonta from August 5-8, 2008. The theme was "Making Connections" and two strands of LOTE workshops were offered, giving participants a choice between general and FLES.



Upon arrival at the scenic Oneonta campus, participants were greeted with a luncheon and welcome address by the co-chairs, NYSAFLT President **Paul Sabatino**, and **Dr. Elizabeth Small**, Chairperson of FL and Literature at SUNY Oneonta. Over the course of the Summer Institute, numerous workshops with practical classroom applications were offered.

In the FLES strand, NYSAFLT Past President **Al Martino** spoke to FLES educators on literacy and **Terry Caccavale**, President of NNELL (National Network for Early Language Learning), provided two workshops. **Nathan Lutz** presented on music/games, video and SMART Board™, while **Kathy Fagan** and **Michèle Pollard** gave a dynamic demonstration of FLES cultural activities, including hands-on no cooking recipes!

The general strand included workshops focused on helping students to make connections: through pictures, projects, technology, travel, and station activities. Participants benefited from the expertise of presenters **Sue Barnes**, **Jen Berie**, **John Carlino**, **Sue Hochmuth**, **Dr.**

Mary McBride, Patience Peebles, and Swaz Piron.

There were workshops of universal interest, as well. NYSAFLT Immediate Past President **Joanne O'Toole** shared strategies on community building in the LOTE classroom. **Natalye Moss** gave new meaning to portfolios with her hands-on scrapbooking workshop and its classroom applications. **Mary Holmes**, NYSED Associate for LOTE Instruction, discussed "NYSED Updates and Initiatives" with all present and also gave a workshop on "Immersion in the Classroom." Teachers even danced the evening away in 2002 New York State Teacher of the Year **Barbara Gordon's** workshop on incorporating dance in the LOTE classroom.

Attendees also enjoyed an immersion reception, followed by dinner and movie night. All of these fun activities served to show how target languages can be brought to students in meaningful ways! That is what "Making Connections" is all about: bringing language alive for the students and being open new experiences as an educator, too!

NYSAFLT Pilots LOTE-Specific Mentoring Program

Are you in your first five year of LOTE teaching? Are you making a significant shift

in your LOTE teaching assignment? Are you embarking on a new LOTE-specific professional endeavor? Are you the sole LOTE teacher in your building or district? Are you new to teaching LOTE in New York State? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, and you believe you would benefit from the support of a LOTE-specific mentor in facing your challenge(s), you are eligible to request mentoring through NYSAFLT's new LOTE-specific mentoring program at www.nysafllt.org.

Are you a seasoned LOTE teacher who has successfully mentored colleagues over the years? If you would like to extend your mentoring skills to your NYSAFLT colleagues, you are invited to apply to be a volunteer mentor in NYSAFLT's new LOTE-specific mentoring program at www.nysafllt.org.

Beginning this fall, NYSAFLT will pilot a LOTE-specific mentoring program to provide support to up to 20 of its members who submit a request. Unlike most mentoring programs, this one acknowledges that LOTE teachers may need support at different points in their careers for a variety of reasons. NYSAFLT members may submit online requests or applications beginning September 1, 2008 for the 2008-09 school year. Drawing on the contents of the requests and applications, the program facilitators will match

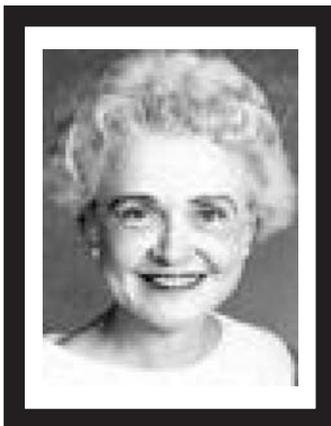
members who request mentoring with volunteer mentors who can best meet their identified needs. The pilot program will be facilitated by NYSAFLT Immediate Past President **Joanne O'Toole** and First Vice-President **Susanne Hochmuth**. The facilitators anticipate having matches completed no later than October 30, 2008, and possibly sooner.

With members all over New York State, NYSAFLT anticipates that most mentoring will take place electronically and/or via telephone. How, when, and how often mentoring takes place are decisions made by each mentoring pair. Go to www.nysaftl.org for a full description of the program and to view complete program guidelines.

FLACNY TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY SHOUDY

Submitted by Barbara Gordon
and Nathan Lutz

Beloved NYSAFLT member **Dorothy Shoudy** died on June 14, 2008. NYSAFLT's Ruth E. Wasley Distinguished Foreign Language Teacher of the Year in 1969, she taught Spanish at Jamesville-DeWitt High School until 1972. Dorothy remained active in several professional organizations up until her passing, including NYSAFLT, FLACNY, and the New York State Retired Teachers' Association.



Dorothy spent her "retirement" teaching classes at Syracuse University, University College, Carrier Corporation and, most recently, in the Adult Education Program at Manlius Pebble Hill School. Dorothy was also quite active in her church, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral. She actively participated in the Spanish Action League and the Young Life (Urban) Program at South Presbyterian Church. She served as a docent of the Everson Museum, where she gave many school tours in Spanish.

The following memories of Dorothy were gathered by Barbara Gordon:

Dorothy was remembered as the paragon of professionalism. Sue Neault talked often with Dorothy over the years and, over many registration tables, "quickly came to recognize her for her meticulous and always professional attire, no matter what the weather." The February SUPER/FLACNY Conference was/is a test for our teachers, in terms of attendance despite freezing cold, wind, snow, ice, but Dorothy never once canceled!

We all admired her commitment to FLACNY, never missing an event, supporting us with her example and her presence. I can attest to the constructive criticism, always given graciously. I will greatly miss her face at our events. She never left an event without saying "thank you" to those who had organized the event.

Other contributors were impressed with "her demeanor as a real lady." Jennifer Roethel remembers "her smile and her ear for listening." She was delightful, a "wonderful woman" as she guided students on Spanish tours through the Everson Museum of Arts in Syracuse. Karen Keep said it was obvious she "truly enjoyed teaching and the Spanish language and culture." Virginia Levine said: "Dorothy was a great lady—so very dedicated to the profession and much beloved by her FLACNY family. May all new LOTE teachers share her passion!" "Truly, the passing of an era."

As I reflect on these memories, I remind all teachers that we never really can grasp the impact a teacher has, not only on his/her students, but also, as we see in the life of Dorothy Shoudy, on her colleagues. As we listened to the touching eulogy of her pastor, who clearly had known Dorothy for many years, we smiled. He mentioned the history of Dorothy's wishes for her funeral service. She gave it to him in the 1980's with

details as to her preferred readings, hymns, etc. She knew exactly what she wanted, and, as he stated, she never changed her mind. Abbe Guillet turned to me and we both whispered, almost simultaneously: “her last lesson plan!” A perfect tribute to a dedicated, confident teacher.

Constitutional Change

Over three years ago, the Executive Committee began work on a daunting project: ensuring that NYSAFLT as an organization is best meeting its obligations as a legal entity in the 21st century. The Executive Committee spent numerous hours in discussions with the NYSAFLT Board of Directors, officers of Regional Affiliates, and in consultation with an attorney and the Constitutional Review Committee.

In June 2008, the Board of Directors approved the final draft of proposed changes to the NYSAFLT Constitution that would realign the relationship between NYSAFLT and the organizations that are its current affiliates. The most fundamental of the changes is the creation of a new category of membership, that of “Organizational Membership.” Organizations around New York State, some of which currently hold the status of NYSAFLT Affiliate, will be invited to join NYSAFLT as member organizations. The

reasoning behind this proposal is simple: according to current IRS and New York State tax laws, if NYSAFLT continues to consider these organizations as its affiliates, NYSAFLT must take full legal and financial responsibility for them. The impracticality of this has made it clear to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors that NYSAFLT has no choice but to reorganize and redefine our relationships with these organizations. As member organizations, regional organizations will no longer be dependent upon NYSAFLT, and NYSAFLT will no longer be responsible for them legally and financially. We hope, with all sincerity, that all of our current affiliates and regional organizations will continue to be a part of the NYSAFLT family by joining as member organizations.

NYSAFLT’s current constitution allows for two methods for approving changes. After approval by the Board of Directors, changes can be approved either by a mail ballot, or at the Annual Business Meeting, held at the Annual Meeting. Due to the exorbitant cost of printing and mailing a copy of the constitution and ballot, the Board of Directors has approved that the changes be voted upon at the Annual Business Meeting. If you will be in attendance at the meeting, we urge your support of these very important proposed changes, necessary for a

sound legal and financial future for our organization.

To view a copy of the proposed changes online prior to the Annual Business Meeting, please visit our website and click on Resources > Documents > Constitution or visit this link: <http://www.nysaflt.org/constitution.htm>. If you do not have online access, please contact NYSAFLT Headquarters for a copy of the proposed changes to the constitution.

A Change Is on Its Way

Have you ever read about an “upcoming” event in the NYSAFLT News only to discover that it had already occurred? To remedy the lack of timeliness associated with the lengthy process of printing, mailing, and delivering the newsletter to your mailbox, the NYSAFLT Board of Directors has voted to convert the NYSAFLT News to an up-to-the-moment online newsletter beginning March 2009.

Not only will you receive your NYSAFLT News in a timelier manner, you will also be able to read more news. Online delivery will permit inclusion of more information and articles as well as photographs in living color. As soon as the newsletter is published online, members will receive a listserv message with a link to the website for the latest issue.

Additional benefits of online newsletter delivery include greatly reduced use of environmental resources and reduced expenses for printing and mailing. In other words, NYSAFLT can help keep our planet green while freeing up funds for other NYSAFLT initiatives and expenses. The Newsletter will still be published four times yearly, in March, June, September, and December.

NYSAFLT members who do not have online access for receiving NYSAFLT News should let us know by contacting NYSAFLT Headquarters in writing at 2400 Main Street, Buffalo, NY, 14214.

Regional News

Capital Region

COLT is busying planning many events for the upcoming school year. Join us as we start the year with a potluck dinner at Schalmont HS. Our speaker will present ideas for mentoring new teachers, which will be of interest to new and experienced teachers alike. The date will be announced shortly: watch for details in an e-mail soon and check out the COLT web page at: <http://www.capitallanguage teachers.org>.

Member Receives National Award

NYSAFLT member **Sophie Kent**, President of the Westchester Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French, is the recipient of the 2008 Contest Administrator of the Year (Small Chapter) Award. This award recognizes Sophie for her hard work organizing the administration of the National French Contest for her chapter. Congratulations to Sophie for this well-deserved honor!

From the Editor

If you have an idea for *NYSAFLT News*, please send it to the editor, Mary Leptak, at newsletter@nysaflt.org.

Resolutions for the New School Year

1. **Be active!** By participating in events with your regional group and language-specific organizations, you can gain not only professional development credit, but the support of colleagues. Many great friendships are made! Attend a few meetings for some fresh ideas for the classroom.

2. **Share with others!** If you have great ideas, present them at a regional or language-specific conference. Presenting at this summer's AATF Convention in Liège, Belgium, I had the chance to meet and spend time with several other NYSAFLT members, all

presenting on different topics. Everyone has something to offer, and this provides a great opportunity to network with other LOTE professionals.

3. **Be positive!** Think about what you love: travel, sports, etc. Why not try to incorporate a little more of this into a unit. Nothing begets enthusiasm like enthusiasm. Students want to learn when we ourselves are energized. The beauty of teaching language is that we can bring a rich variety of topics to our classroom!

4. **Bring outside interests into your classroom with an interdisciplinary activity.** The NYSAFLT Summer Institute featured projects integrating art, food, music, dance, technology and travel. A student who loves photography will be more connected to language when making captions for a scrapbook or creating a DVD of his photos. It might be history that piques the interest of another student. Start simple: perhaps team up with one teacher this year from another department and see how your new unit goes!

5. **Remember to take time for yourself, too!** It is noble to hold ourselves to a high standard, but it is a lot to incorporate new ideas in the classroom. Try one or two at a time and remember that we are at our best when we are relaxed and rested. Outside interests keep us enthusiastic. Exercise and a good night's sleep keep us happy and ready to face each day with a smile. Have a great school year!

Mark Your Calendars



September

- 15** Deadline: Fall Journal Submissions
- 15-16** Board of Regents Meeting

October

- 09-11** NYS AFLT Meetings: Executive Committee, Board of Directors and Nominations Committee (Saratoga)
- 10-12** Annual Meeting Saratoga
- 20-21** Board of Regents Meeting

November

- 01** Deadline: December *Newsletter*
- 07-09** NYS AFLT Meetings: Joint Executive & A.M. Planning Committees
- 21-23** ACTFL/AATG Conference (Orlando, FL)

December

- 01** Deadline: Mead Scholar Award Applications

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