11th ANNUAL DINNER

The National Museum of Language (NML) held its Eleventh Annual Dinner on Saturday, June 27, 2009, at the Clarion Inn in College Park, Maryland. While always a festive and special occasion, this dinner was memorable for a number of reasons: Firstly, it was one of the largest turnouts ever. Next, it was the first time that many attendees had seen President Amelia Murdoch since her recent illness. Well enough to preside over the event and “back in the saddle again,” she received a standing ovation when given a bouquet from the Board of Trustees. NML Board of Trustee Dr. Pat Barr-Harrison then gave a moving tribute to the late Dr. Dora F. Kennedy, a language giant who was a Museum co-founder and long-time NML Associate. The tribute featured a collection of memorabilia of her distinguished career and ended with an appropriate few moments of silence for the esteemed linguist, author, educator and mentor. Then it was the unveiling of the world’s first international flag of language. Flag maker and NML Associate Debra Kietzman provided her hand-sewn 4’ by 5’ version of the flag which hung behind the head table. NML Associate and Project Coordinator Greg Nedved brought a commercially-made version of the flag, which was mounted in the Reception Room. Attendees also saw a sampling of the new collection of children’s books in various languages, donated by Havre de Grace, Maryland, librarian Ann Kietzman, which were on display in the Reception Room. Special visitor, Mary Kietzman (Ann’s daughter and a librarian as well), represented her mother at the event, sitting at the head table. Finally, the event featured a husband and wife guest speaker team (memorable in itself)—former Ambassador to Romania and current Maryland State Senator James Rosapepe and former national news television correspondent and current Maryland radio personality Sheilah Kast. The two are completing a book about their experiences in Romania—Dracula is Dead: How Romanians Survived Communism, Ended It, and Emerged as the New Italy Since 1989—to be published by Bancroft Press in the fall of this year.

(continued on page 3)
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Memberships are in effect for the calendar year

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- □ Patron                      $5,000 and up
- □ Corporate Member           $2,500
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To join the NML, check the appropriate membership level, fill in the information below, and mail this form along with your check to the Museum. Make checks payable to The National Museum of Language.

To pay with a credit card, access our Paypal link on www.languagemuseum.org.

Note: Members outside of the U.S. should add an additional fee of $6 to cover mailing costs.

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☐ I would like to volunteer to help with museum activities
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NML is officially recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Membership contributions are therefore tax deductible to the full extent authorized under the law.

How to contact us:
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The speech, which concluded with some questions from the audience, was essentially divided into two parts (appropriate for two speakers!). The first part, filled with humorous anecdotes, was about Romania and the Romanian language. One memorable anecdote was about President Clinton receiving a gift of a Romanian flag with the center cut out (a symbol of post-Ceaucescu Romania) and apparently believing that it was a poncho! Kast expressed surprise that Romanian, the result of the Roman occupation of Dacia, would take root, given its location in a neighborhood of Slavic and/or Turkish languages. She mentioned a couple of Romanian expressions which she regretted that Americans did not have—"we’re waiting for you" and "I kiss your hand." Both speakers had high praise for the linguistic abilities of the Romanians—"please excuse me but my English is not as good as my French,"—making it very easy for them to travel around and conduct Embassy business in Romania. An unfortunate (but expected) result of this was that both lost opportunities to improve their own Romanian. Rosapepe did say though that Kast, a French major, was better in the language than he. Rosapepe concentrated on updating the audience on language-related initiatives in Maryland. He in fact is sponsoring legislation to improve the state’s heritage speaker capabilities. He pointed out that only 1/3 of all heritage speakers in Maryland were Spanish (a low figure nationally) and invited the audience to name other popular ones—Chinese, Tamil, Russian were just three of those identified. He mentioned other initiatives, e.g., improving the English levels of non-native speakers who were already advanced in English, dual immersions, and heritage teacher certification. From a comment from the audience, attendees also learned of websites, e.g., www.cal.org and www.nflc.org, that had further information on heritage speaker initiatives.

As has been the precedent for these dinners, a major feature was the always popular Silent Auction. The winning tickets were drawn at the end for the door prize and the 50/50 contest. Those receiving Presidential Awards from Dr. Murdoch were Secretary Alan Turnbull, Board of Trustees members Dr. Pat Barr-Harrison, Gary McConie, and Dr. Jill Robbins and Associate Greg Nedved. Robbins took the occasion to thank Associate Dr. Janet Chernela for her help with the Speakers Program. Special long distance visitors were Associates Debra Kieft (North Carolina) and LaDonna Mann (South Carolina) and former NML intern Nick Hartley (North Carolina). Other distinguished attendees were former members of the Board Burton Scheiner and former Mayor of College Park Anna Owens, as well as former Mayor of University Park John Brunner and Prince George’s County Council member Eric Olson. NML Board member Richard Biffl and his wife Heidi, celebrating their 17th wedding anniversary, also attended. With so many memorable things happening, it was truly a dinner for the history books!

--Greg Nedved
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It’s thank-you time!

We regularly recognize special accomplishment but we must do more to express our debt to all who contribute their time, talents and skills to making the Museum an outstanding success. Over the years we have grown into a complex organization whose members play a significant role in supporting the many activities of the Museum.

Members of the Board of Trustees constitute the backbone of the Museum. They shape policy and choose the people to carry out that policy. Happily, our trustees are also hands-on people who can be counted on to participate in all phases of our work: chairing and serving on committees, acting as docents, supporting the speakers series and other special events. Our Officers provide important leadership in ongoing tasks carrying out the day to day business of the organization.

Museum Associates form an invaluable source of assistance for the Trustees and committee chairs. Providing a diversity of talents and experiences, they act in many capacities, serving on a regular basis or responding to special requests as the need arises. They are especially effective as spokesmen for the Museum.

Our committees represent one of our greatest resources. The Administration and Membership Committees played a basic and significant role in laying the ground work of the organization and fostering the Newsletter. The Programs Committee, which develops the exhibits that are the heart and soul of the Museum, through its dedication, enthusiasm and hard work, is constantly striving to improve its work, ably assisted by the Web committee and other support committees. The recently formed Development Committee has been particularly successful in obtaining grants. The symbiotic relationship between the Programs and Development Committees has been very productive.

Speakers and panelists, drawn from distinguished scholars and experts, have enabled us to broaden and enrich our offerings. Other individuals, inspired by the mission of the Museum, have led the NML to support projects that have brought us national and international recognition.

The Museum’s team of Docents came into being with the opening of the Museum to the public. Recognizing the value of having informed and trained staff to assist the public, special attention was given to preparation of materials for the use of the docents. Their performance has been one of the real success stories of our public presence, winning praise from staff and visitors alike.

Among those who deserve particular recognition are our members. Their loyalty and generosity over the years have made them our personal friends, even though we may never have met. It is highly important that we and they continue our joint journey toward the fulfillment of our dream. Again, as we do every year, we remind our members and friends that dues are essential since they may be used to defray operating expenses for which so many grants may not be used.

I leave for last a most important group—those who visit the Museum. Their approval of our mission and their enthusiasm for the exhibits have been most rewarding. We have always believed deeply in the concept of a museum of language, but the warmth of the reception given to our work has surpassed our expectations. We are grateful for your interest and your encouragement of others to visit our exhibits.

For your past efforts, for your promise for the future, I salute you all!

--Amelia C. Murdoch

NML in THE ATA CHRONICLE

NML was featured in the April 2009 issue of The ATA (American Translators Association) Chronicle, the official periodical of the veteran organization. Written by Associate Greg Nedved, the article was entitled Introducing the National Museum of Language and provided a history and an overview of the Museum. It included pictures taken off the NML website. The ATA leadership invited the NML to participate in future conferences and looked forward to visiting the Museum someday. The article can be found on the Museum website www.languagemuseum.org.

--Greg Nedved
NEW NML FLAG

The NML premiered the International Flag of Language (IFL), the world’s first flag dedicated to language alone, at its annual dinner on Saturday, June 27, 2009. Associate Debra Kieft, who hand-sewed the 4’ by 5’ flag, brought it with her from North Carolina. Associate Greg Nedved, the project coordinator, brought along a slightly-larger commercial copy of the flag. Both were displayed at the dinner.

The flag is the result of a contest for school children and young adults sponsored by the Museum to design the winning entry. The contest, the Museum’s contribution to commemorate UNESCO’s International Year of Languages, ran from September to November of last year and received entries from all over the world. In the end, a panel of judges, experts in languages and vexillology, picked the winning entries and determined the final design. First place winners (a tie) were Mr. Peter Klumpenhower, Grants, New Mexico, and Tedi Dessin, Middletown, Delaware, who both offered tree designs similar to the final result. Both received cash awards and plaques. Runners-up were Elena Erbez, Spain; Karly Soulas, West Chester, Pennsylvania; and Jay Lago, Dade City, Florida. All five individuals received a membership in the Museum.

The judges liked the idea of a tree to represent languages. The three shades of green leaves represent living languages, dead languages, and future languages respectively on a brown two-tone tree trunk. The stylish curves flowing away from the tree represent the spread of knowledge gained from languages. Debra’s flag is currently displayed at the Museum and hopefully at other sites as well. In fact, there have been requests to use the flag’s tree image. “Although the flag belongs to the Museum now, it also belongs to the world,” Greg reminds us. He is also writing an article about the project for the flag magazine, NAVA NEWS, which will come out this fall.

--Greg Nedved
KIETZMAN DONATION


This welcome addition to the Museum’s library will be available to visitors to the Museum and will be used in displays and as part of various Museum programs in the coming years. A complete inventory remains to be done, but a cursory glance reveals texts in such disparate languages as Ukrainian, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, French, Polish, Japanese, Portuguese, German, Gaelic and Korean.

The books were accumulated by Ms. Kietzman from sources around the world during her career as a librarian at the Harford County Public Library. She, her friends and relatives were always looking out for appropriate additions to her collection on their far-ranging travels, and now the books have found a welcome home at the Museum.

--Gary McConne

LIBRARY THING

There is something new on the homepage library section—it is called “Library Thing.” Compiled by Museum Librarian Gary McCone, this is an attempt to categorize and document the Museum’s growing list of books. In addition to the Allen Walker Read collection (the Museum’s library collection for many years), there is also the abovementioned Kietzman collection (around 60 books are now in Museum spaces). Gary is sometimes also able to get FREE Library of Congress books for the Museum as well. The proper disposition of these incoming books (Are the books suitable?, Should they be lent out?, How can we keep these collections separate?, etc.,) is the mission, among other things, of the Museum’s Library Committee. To “check out” Library Thing, go to http://www.librarything.com/profile/languagemuseum. You will discover that Gary has done a lot of work so far. Thanks Gary for taking on an important task!

--Greg Nedved

Debra Kieft Presents Her Flag
Amelia Murdoch, Jim Rosapepe, Sheilah Kast and Eric Olson (Head Table NML Dinner)

Leah Mason and Her Husband Julius Shapiro
IN MEMORIAM--NML CO-FOUNDER DORA F. KENNEDY

Dr. Dora F. Kennedy, a giant in the language world, passed away earlier this year. She was memorialized at the 27 June annual dinner by NML Trustee Pat Barr-Harrison, who’s moving tribute featured a collection of memorabilia of the honoree’s distinguished career and ended with an appropriate few moments of silence. NML President Amelia Murdoch concluded the tribute by describing Kennedy’s role in the founding of the NML. Many of those touched by Kennedy were in attendance. Her entire obituary can be found on the Museum homepage at www.languagemuseum.org. Here, meanwhile, is a mini-biography of this distinguished linguist, educator, author, mentor, and leader:

Dora F. Kennedy, 1921-2009, was a NML co-founder and also served as an Associate from the Museum’s beginning. She was a great believer in and supporter of the NML.

Kennedy was the first supervisor of foreign language education in Prince George’s County, Maryland. She received a number of awards for her contributions to foreign language education and was a member of several professional and academic honor societies. She was a former president of the Maryland Foreign Language Association and a member of the executive council of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Almost all of the foreign language teachers in Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties today were trained by her.

Dr. Kennedy’s passion was teaching, and that was the focus and love of her life. The Language World lost a true leader and the NML lost a loyal supporter and long-time friend.

--Greg Nedved

Fran Reed and Sandy Allen at the NML Dinner
In August 2008, Mr. Herbert H. Fockler, a former member of the NML Board of Directors, passed away. Mr. Fockler, and his wife Mrs. Mary A. Fockler, were faithful supporters of the NML and were regular attendees at just about every NML-sponsored event.

Mr. Fockler was born in Summersville, West Virginia, and was a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland. He was an Army Air Forces veteran of World War II. After the war, he graduated from West Virginia University and in 1948 received a master's degree in political science and international relations from the school. In 1952, he received a master's degree in library sciences from Catholic University.

Mr. Fockler was Director of the Library of Congress's Serials Department from 1956 to 1958. He then spent a year as Assistant Director of the White House Conference on Children and Youth. Between 1961 and 1969, he worked as Chairman of the Grant Research Committee at the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Library of Medicine. He served as Development Director at Georgetown University from 1975 to 1985. After his work at Georgetown, Mr. Fockler was an adviser on a Russian Cultural Exchange Program with the State Department and chaired foundations for technology and sustainability. During the Nixon administration, he was Director of the Office of Voluntary Action in the Executive Office of the President. He also advised a number of organizations, including the Washington [DC] Academy of Sciences and the National Council for Science and the Environment.

Mr. Fockler’s broad experience and wide ranging human contacts were of great assistance in helping the NML Board of Directors in its early years.

--Whitney Reed

MUSEUM LEADERSHIP CHANGES

A common adage is that a successful organization is a mixture of old and new—this the NML possesses. Since the last issue of the newsletter, the NML Board of Trustees (no longer the Board of Directors) has filled two vacancies, adding—Richard Biffl and Gary McCone. Here are their biographies. Biffl had been an Associate before.

Richard Biffl was an associate of the NML and a member of its Development Committee before being elected to its Board, and in past years he assisted with the Museum's information technology. Biffl serves as Board President of the College Park Arts Exchange and was a co-founder of the College Park Youth Orchestra. Active in local affairs, he has been a member of several civic boards and advisory committees. Before establishing his software and consulting business, Biffl practiced law in Washington, D.C. He holds a B.A. in Government from Harvard and a J.D. from Georgetown.

Gary K. McCone holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Asian Studies and an M.L.S. in Library Science, all from the University of Arizona. He attended the Defense Language Institute twice, in Mandarin Chinese and North Vietnamese, and had overseas assignments with the Army Security Agency in Taiwan, Vietnam and Thailand. For the past 32 years he has held various positions with the Library of Congress and the USDA National Agricultural Library (NAL), culminating with his current position as Director of Information Technology at NAL.

New Associates (since the last issue) are retired Prince Georges County Spanish teacher and current Museum docent, Barbara Bennett, Anup Majahan, National Capital Language Resource Center Assistant Project Director (active on numerous committees), and Leah Mason, Columbia University Ed.D. student, a Museum docent who is also active on numerous Museum committees. Former Board of Trustees member R. David Zorc is now an Associate as well.

Next, the NML has added government Serbo-Croatian instructor Dragana McFadden and Montgomery College student Timothy Gerald as docents (joining the existing group of Amelia Murdoch, Pat Barr-Harrison, Jill Robbins, Greg Nedved, Barbara Bennett, Alan Turnbull, Sandy Allen, Amy Carattini, Leah Mason and Gary McCone). Unfortunately, Chika Nagase has returned to Japan after docenting for a few months. Thank you Chika! Thank you all! Welcome aboard Dragana and Timothy!

Finally, Silvina Alarcon, a Montgomery College student, has been the Museum administrative assistant since June 2009 thanks to grant money provided by Eric Olson (Prince George’s County councilmember). She is one of our docents as well.

--Greg Nedved
The NML, in the last few months, continued on with its Marian Jenkins Speaker Series. Begun in 2008, this series commemorates the generous bequest of an NML friend who regrettably did not live to see the Museum open its doors to the public. These weekend presentations have been extremely well-received, often reflected in standing room only attendance and lively speaker-audience exchanges. Since they are held in the Museum Exhibit Room, visitors therefore also have a chance to see the Museum and its exhibits.

More information on specific programs can be found on the NML website at www.languagemuseum.org. You can, for example, download podcasts for some at http://languagemuseum.org/podcasts/. In fact, you can find a link to a report there by Tom Braslavsky of the National Capital Language Resource Center about Miriam Isaacs’ 25 January 2009 presentation—Discourses in Dying Languages: My Story with Yiddish. Here is the complete list of the programs:

8 November 2008—Lost in Translation: Collaborative Translation of Chinese Poetry, Liang Huichun, University of Maryland and Steven Schroeder, Shenzhen University and the University of Chicago

25 January 2009—Discourses in Dying Languages: My Story with Yiddish, Miriam Isaacs, Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, University of Maryland

22 February—Persian Poetry and Calligraphy, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, Director of the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute of Persian Studies

15 March—From Abyssinia to Addis Ababa: A Live Painting Demonstration with Amharic Characters, Solomon Asfaw

April 19—Paper, Rock, Bone, and Bronze—An Epigraphic Odyssey, Dr. Edward D. Rockstein, L-3 Communications

May 16—Informal Language Learning In and Around DC: Families Welcome; Kaaren Agnez, Minilinguists.com and Mashinke/Marcia Gruss Levinsohn, Jewish Educational Workshop, Talia Kowitt, University of Maryland

Greg Nedved
A BASTILLE DAY TO REMEMBER

On July 14, 2009, the Museum opened its doors to its largest group visit to date. Forty-seven students from the French Immersion program at Maryvale Elementary School in Montgomery County joined us at the Museum to celebrate Bastille Day. Students ranging in age from 5-12 years sang and danced to French folk tunes with Dr. Pat Barr-Harrison in the Museum’s main exhibit hall before exploring our ongoing exhibit on “Writing Language: Passing It On” with docent Leah Mason. Learning about the many different alphabets used in written language caused many students to reflect upon their own language-learning experiences in English and French, as well as Spanish, Hebrew, Czech, Russian, and Arabic.

Dr. Jill Robbins shared her extensive knowledge of Japanese language and culture with students, challenging them to test their paper folding skills by making origami soldiers hats to represent the French Revolution. Volunteers Anna Newman (Blake High School, Silver Spring) and Nozomi Nishimura (of Nara, Japan), a visitor to the area, enthusiastically assisted students with the origami project. The students were then led to the activity room where they had the opportunity to try writing Chinese characters on our ‘magic paper.’

The Museum expanded its offerings to this group by traveling to the park with students and continuing language exploration activities. Docents Barbara Bennett, Silvina Alarcon, and Timothy Gerald, rode on the yellow school bus to nearby Calvert Park to share a unique Spanish language experience. Students learned Spanish songs and games in the park before having an opportunity to picnic and enjoy the playground equipment. The students’ smiles and energy put our staff to the test and I think all would agree that we came out with flying colors!

--Leah Mason

WAR OF 1812 GRANT

In exciting news, the Museum was able to receive $12,350 in grant money from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority to sponsor “Language Adventures along the Anacostia Trail” this fall. The first objective of the program is to increase public awareness of the NML through visits by local Anacostia Trails Heritage Area students and their families. This grant will help to alleviate the pressures on local school budgets while allowing them to continue to expand their students’ knowledge of the heritage of their home state. Teachers in particular have expressed the need for funding to help out with field trips such as a visit to the NML. The second objective is to develop a new exhibit, “Emerging American Language in 1812,” which will highlight the American dialect’s divergence from British English. This exhibit will help to identify the unique linguistic dynamics present in the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area at the time of the War of 1812. This exhibit will make the NML part of the state's commemoration of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial.

Dr. Pat Barr-Harrison chaired an organizational meeting in early August to begin planning the exhibit. Although things are still being decided, major language topics might include local languages and dialects (native Americans, African American slaves, European languages in the Anacostia Trail area—and how they affected English, differences between British and the emerging American English, and differences between American English then and now. The role of the great Noah Webster is certainly to be discussed—he published his first dictionary, A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language, in 1806. Other issues being clarified are the size, constitution and location of the exhibit. Orin Hargraves, a lexicographer who specializes in the differences between British and American English, will be retained to help the NML staff develop this exhibit.

This exhibit will become part of a larger exhibition being developed by the Museum with a target opening date of September 2010—“Living Language.” That project will display our nation’s diverse linguistic communities and how languages in them are constantly evolving. Tentative topics include identity as expressed in language, the effects of immigration on language communities, regional dialects, and the use of slang within specific demographic groups. The languages which will be used as examples of living language will include many spoken by immigrants to and residents of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, such as African-American Vernacular English, African American English, Central American and Caribbean Spanish, spoken Modern Hebrew, Yiddish, Persian, Turkish, Ge’ez, Amharic, Urdu, and Hindi. This inclusion in the new exhibition will allow for maintenance of the exhibit, Emerging American Language of 1812, after the grant period ends in 2010.

--Greg Nedved

THANK YOU, GARY!
THE CHANGING NEWSLETTER!

Welcome to the Newsletter’s changed format! Gone are the days of the printed newsletter that was published a couple of times a year or more and mailed out to the membership. The new format, in addition to being cheaper, gives the editor more flexibility. Finally, it should be faster. This newsletter will be sent out to the membership by e-mail and will also be posted on the website. Of course, the NML leadership realizes that not everyone will like the change, preferring the hard copy. Not everyone, after all, likes using e-mail or even feels comfortable using it. In this case, accommodations will be made.

--Greg Nedved

COLLEGE PARK BLUES FESTIVAL

The NML has participated in a number of College Park-related activities in recent years, convenient and appropriate given its current location. Maryland Day and the International Fall Festival are just a couple that come to mind. Below is a write-up of another, the College Park Blues Festival, which was held a few months ago.

--Greg Nedved

The National Museum of Language was proud to participate in the College Park Blues Festival on Saturday, November 8, 2008, at Ritchie Coliseum. The warm, sunny fall day attracted dozens of people to the festival and our booth. The booth featured a tri-fold highlighting blues terminology which was prepared by Jill Robbins especially for the event. Copies of the Newsletter and brochures were also available. Visitors interested in the booth ranged from small children eager to share their newly acquired blues vocabulary with their parents to local adults surprised to discover the Museum is practically in their own backyard. Overall the mood was festive with blues enthusiasts dancing the afternoon away and proved to be a great way to advertise the Museum to local residents.

--Gary McConne

NML WIKI

Anyone who is a regular visitor to the NML website cannot help but notice that there are always new things on there. This is the sign of an active website—and of a progressive museum. One of the latest additions—and a sign of the times—is the NML Wiki. A quick look at it will show you that you can find links to just about every language theme imaginable, starting with “Acronyms” (the letter A) to “World English” (the letter W). In fact, as of September 1, 2009, there were 33 pages and nine articles found on the page. A week from now, those figures will undoubtedly be obsolete. There is also a tutorial for wiki novices. There is even a modified logo! Try http://aclweb.org/nmlwiki to see for yourself, i.e., to “go wiki.” Have fun!

--Greg Nedved

The National Museum of Language

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2009

OCTOBER 2009

NOVEMBER 2009

ACTFL Conference November 20-22, 2009

DECEMBER 2009

Holiday Reception TBA

All routine NML meetings, e.g., Board of Trustees, Administration Committee, will be announced at a later date.