A Promise for the Future:
The Young Linguist Program

Imagine a positive activity in which young people participate that links them to the world. Imagine a program where young people explore the languages of the world and all aspects of language. The vision of a Young Linguist Program will be an integral part of the National Museum of Language. The Young Linguist Program will tap into the motivation and enthusiasm of our youth while providing them with a program that puts them on the path to greater knowledge of their language and the wonders of language all around them. In this age of technology, as the world seems to be getting smaller and closer, what better time to grasp the moment and create a program where students can learn, share, belong, explore, and have fun together?

The possibilities for a Young Linguist Program are endless. Students are gathered around a computer monitor as they conduct a video conference with their pen pals in Russia. A youth group visits a local aquarium to study communication among dolphins. Six-year-old Amy is learning to sing a song in sign language. Jason practices the art of Japanese calligraphy. The National Museum of Language and the Young Linguist Program will be at the epicenter of these exciting activities and will serve as a resource to all those who wish to find out more about language. Children will be afforded many educational opportunities on topics ranging from learning about the language of their ancestors to analyzing regional dialects in the United States through the Young Linguist Program. Young Linguists will discover the ever-changing and fascinating world of language.

As we move forward with our plans to build the National Museum of Language, young people will not have to wait for back and mortar to seize this opportunity. The Museum web sites will provide information, activities, virtual exhibits and valuable links to get all future linguists started on their way.

So many of us look back at our childhood and reminisce about activities and groups that provided important life experiences for us. There were significant adult role models in our lives who helped to shape who we have become. A feeling of belonging contributed to our positive self-image and created life-long friendships. These experiences that inspired and challenged us stay with us even today. It is the goal of the National Museum of Language and the Young Linguist Program to offer such memories-in-the-making to the young people of the twenty-first century.

Leslie M. Grabn

Annual Workshop

On March 18, 2000, twelve of the National Museum of Language's Directors and Associates met with President Amelia Murdoch at the Old Parish House in College Park, MD, to hold an annual workshop devoted to strategic planning for the Museum. The meeting began with a luncheon, the introduction of participants and a welcoming address by President Murdoch to open the session.

Representing the Operations/Facilities Committee, Associate Ann Rossisi spoke about the proposal for a web site developed by the Committee on February 18. The Committee recommended that this first web site represent the National Museum of Language only and that the Young Linguist program be included in a second web site under a domain name already reserved. The critical audience for the first NML web site was to be the general public, the people who were potential members of the NML. A public service announcement would ultimately be made on the web and in print about the launching of this web site, which would focus on the Linguistic Heritage of America. The possibility of a guest curator was also discussed. Cost for the design and development of this web site was estimated at $20,000 to $25,000. Lengthy discussions were held regarding sources of funding.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL MEMBER!!

The NML recently welcomed its first international member when it received the dues of Geoffrey Sudbury of Cheltenham, England.

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Message from the President

In 1944, writing in *The Journal of Language*, Frederick Bodmer observed that “there are no public language museums with attractive and instructive exhibits.” Today it is exciting to be renewing memberships for the next year for just such a museum. It is rewarding to know that we are on our way to creating those “attractive and instructive exhibits.” As we begin the year, it is my pleasure to welcome our new members, to thank those of you who are renewing your membership, and to assure all of you how important your continuing interest and your vote of confidence are to us. We encourage you to be our ambassadors to help us achieve our goals.

Envisioning the projects we have discussed and the plans we are laying out, I have a strong sense that the year 2000 is going to be an exciting year of accomplishment and progress for the Museum. Through the Newsletter we want to share with you, our members and friends, the ideas that inspire us, and our plans as they take shape.

I compare the present stage of the Museum to a huge excavation where sturdy foundations are being laid. I think of the Newsletter as a window on this construction site, a viewing spot at which you, the passersby, can follow the work as it proceeds. As at a construction site, in these early days, there are more workers to watch than floors, walls, and windows to count. Many of our articles are therefore about those who are the creators of the vision. You will learn about the members of the Organizing Committee, who gave shape and substance to the dream. You will get to know the members of the Board of Directors who have committed themselves to the hard work of strengthening the foundations, defining the shape of things to come, and finding the resources to bring it all about. And you will follow the ongoing efforts of our Associates and other volunteers, whose wealth of experience is one of our greatest endowments, and without whom there would be no realization of our dream.

In time, the articles will tell more and more about plans and programs, our outreach to the larger community. You will be able to share step by step in the forward movement of the design of the Museum. To me, this is a wonderful opportunity. To feel that we are taking part in the development of a world-class museum, to know that our efforts will make a lasting contribution to the education and enlightenment of the people of our own country and of the world, is a great privilege.

Your interest and your response to our plans are greatly appreciated. In this issue our feature article, written by NML Secretary Leslie Grahn, is on the Young Linguist Program. In order to broaden our pool of contributors to the Newsletter, we are adding a new column, “Why I Support the National Museum of Language.” Our first guest contributor is Dr. Anne Fountain, an early and enthusiastic member of the Museum.

We are fortunate to count among our friends and supporters the distinguished men and women who are introduced to you in these pages, and we hope that you, too, will feel that our future is in good hands.

Anne C. Murdoch
Spotlight on
Setting the Stage
The Art of Presenting a Museum Exhibit

For senior exhibition designer Ann Rossili, putting together an exhibition is like producing a movie or staging a play. There are many components to be factored in: space, lighting, colors, textures, the historical and social backdrop, financial resources, etc. And, as in the case of cinema or theatre, there is the all-important question of public appeal. Like a play or a movie, an exhibition needs a public. In fact, Rossili sees the visitor to her exhibits in the double role of audience and cast. “A modern exhibit,” Rossili explains, “will take the shape that the visitor wants it to.” The visitor not only interacts with the objects of the exhibition by pushing buttons or clicking on a screen, but provides a running commentary to the ideas projected, many of which challenge assumptions, or present them in a new light. In other words, it is the visitor’s input that animates the show and completes the “script.” Rossili has had occasion to observe this phenomenon at her latest exhibition, “On Time,” currently on view at the National Museum of American History and in previous exhibits. The visitors’ input ranges from “dialogues” between the visitor and the various hands-on materials and equipment, to entire conversations triggered by particular elements of an exhibit. “You’d be surprised at the conversations that go on at the nuclear shelter in the ‘Science in American Life’ exhibition says Rossili, referring to an older project, still on show at the National Museum of American History. Unlike a theatrical or musical production, however, a museum exhibit can take years to “stage.” The “On Time” exhibition, for instance, took all of four years to prepare and was the product of collaboration between a team of specialists. For her part, Rossili has had a distinguished career as exhibition designer; in addition to the “On Time” and “Science in American Life” exhibitions, her credits include participation as project designer for “With Pen and Graver,” “Building a National Collection,” and “Going Strong,” at the National Museum of American History. Prior to joining the Smithsonian Institution, Rossili owned and operated her own exhibition and consulting firm. She holds a B.S. degree in Industrial Design from the Philadelphia College of Art (University of the Arts) and has studied painting at the Corcoran School of Art. An advocate of the team approach in planning and designing exhibitions, Rossili has conducted workshops on the method at the George Washington University and has taught courses at Georgetown University.

Even after many years of designing exhibitions, Rossili always experiences a surge of excitement as a new show begins to take shape. The thrill of seeing a concept

Spotlight on
Mike Levin

Mike Levin, a member of the Museum’s Board of Directors, and a self-described “old codger,” recently was faced with a rather nagging language mystery. As a retired Department of Defense officer who is married to a retired cryptologist and who, thus, by all accounts, should be well-prepared to handle language mysteries, he was plagued by one that just wouldn’t let him rest. It all began when a pleasant day in Switzerland in the mid-nineties found him and his wife at a local festival. There they bought two identical wine glasses, one for each, to sample the local wines. They brought the glasses home as souvenirs. And that’s when it hit him: the writing printed on the outside of the glass didn’t make any sense.

The cryptic phrase was “Schnellis mich um walls.” Levin was no stranger to German, if indeed the inscription was based on German. Perhaps seeds of his knowledge of the language were planted during World War II, when he served in a field artillery unit in the arduous and pivotal Battle of the Bulge. Frequent travel to Germany later in his career enabled him to develop his skills, and he felt he had “enough

Continues on page 5.

News of our Directors and Associates:

- On January 19, NML President Amelia Murdoch addressed the College Park chapter of Rotary International on the origins and development of the Museum.
- Associate Herman R. Bosnich attended the Annual Meeting of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), February 23-27, in Birmingham, Alabama.
- At the Library of Congress Center for the Book, on February 28, President Murdoch and Director Herbert H. Fokker presented an information packet on the NML to Center Director John Y. Cole and Martha Hopkins, co-author of the Center’s new publication, Language of the Land.
- NML Secretary Leslie Graham attended the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, March 10-13, presenting a paper with Dr. William DeLorenzo on “Teacher Preparation: a Multi-Language Collaborative Program.”
- On March 25 Associate Ann Rossili gave members of the NML Board of Directors a special behind-the-scenes tour of the NMAH “On Time” exhibit with emphasis on the concepts, planning, and techniques involved in designing exhibits.

Continues at bottom of page 7.
Spotlight on
She’s One of Ours!

It was with these words that NML President Amelia Murdoch announced last Spring that Leslie Grahn, member of the Board of Directors of the National Museum of Language, had just been named Teacher of the Year in Prince George’s County, Maryland. The news was received with considerable excitement but little surprise by those acquainted with Grahn. A dedicated and enthusiastic teacher, Grahn has served the public school system for 19 years, teaching the 7th and 8th grades. A native of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Grahn graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore County with a B.A. in Secondary Education, French and Spanish. She is currently Chair of the Foreign Language Department of Martin Luther King Jr Middle School, a magnet school in Prince George’s County, Maryland, where her husband, Frank, teaches math. In addition to her teaching and other responsibilities, Grahn works as a freelance consultant for Prentice-Hall and National Textbook Company, does curriculum writing for Prince George’s County, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Maryland Foreign

Report from the Committees

New Administration Committee
Formed from Merger of
Development/Public Relations Committee and Planning, Programs and Budget Committee

As a way of achieving greater efficiency in the use of volunteer time, the Development/Public Relations Committee and the Planning, Programs and Budget Committee have merged to form a single committee henceforth to be known as the Administration Committee. Up to now, the Development/Public Relations Committee had focused on developing its mission statement and approving a set of guidelines for committee work. Considerable time has been spent in planning both for the Workshop held on March 18 and the Annual Meeting scheduled for June 10. Work was also started on developing plans for publicity packets and conducting research on foundations which provide start-up financial grants.

The data base on members has been completed and is now fully operational. Membership gift levels have been redefined to provide greater latitude. Approval was given to a new NML logo, and the Committee is now working on development of membership cards, and certificates of membership and appreciation for volunteer work. During 1999 the 76 members of the NML contributed more than $10,000 in dues. During their meeting of February 3, Committee members stressed the need to develop a website and discussed the advantages and difficulties associated with the task, e.g. cost and staffing. It was also pointed out that prospective members should eventually be able to use their credit cards in applying for membership.

One of the major achievements of the Committee members to date has been the publication of the 1998 Annual Report and the first two issues (Fall 1999 and Winter 2000) of the NML Newsletter.

The Administration Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month. Members of the two merged committees are: Amelia Murdoch (co-chair), Whitney Reed (co-chair), Herman Bostick, Helen Carpenter, Herbert Fockler, Mary Herschbach, Jessica Johnson, Michael Judge, Jim McFadden, Anna Owens, Joseph Page, Frances Reed, and William Tobin.

Operations and Facilities Committee (OFC)

Several announcements ushered in the last meeting of the OFC. It was brought to the committee’s attention that the year 2000 may be designated “The Year of Language.” Accordingly, it was suggested that a proclamation/resolution campaign be prepared for the upcoming annual meeting. NML President Amelia Murdoch and Director Herbert Fockler informed the committee that they would attend a book-signing event on February 28 at the Library of Congress Center for the Book, on the occasion of the Center’s new publication, Language of the Land. Other announcements included the possibility of the Language Museum obtaining part or all of the largest collection of wooden type print from a private collector.

A report written by Anne Rossilli, web sub-committee Chair, was distributed and discussed. The report reflected President Amelia Murdoch’s concern that the potential audience of the Museum be expanded to include Heritage Library Centers, printers, publishers, and organizations such as Boy Scouts, NEA, PTA, and the State Departments of Education.

The committee discussed the proposed NML website and decided that the position of Webmaster for the site should be a paid position. Other concerns included the need for accuracy on the internet site. The sub-committee was given the task of creating three plans at different cost levels, with a timeline and cost analysis in each case. Bill Rivers agreed to draft a concept proposal with regard to the content of the website.

Attending were Leslie Grahn, Ila Gupta, Shawn Hinz, Dora Kennedy, Amelia Murdoch and William Rivers.
Spotlight on
A Meeting of the Minds

A visit to San Francisco’s Exploratorium was an inspiring event for graduate student Helen Carpenter, who visited this museum while in the process of choosing a topic for her Master’s thesis at Georgetown University. Intrigued by the Exploratorium’s innovative displays, she immediately saw the possibilities for teaching the public about her own favorite subject, linguistics, through this approach. She was aware that linguistic topics frequently arise in the public forum and that often the public’s lack of knowledge, or misinformation on the subject, can significantly affect the public’s views and actions. Carpenter therefore decided to propose in her thesis that the methods and techniques of the Exploratorium should be used to transmit the scholarly findings of linguists in a format more easily accessible to a wider public, that is, in the setting of a museum of linguistics.

In high hopes, Carpenter presented the proposal to her thesis director, Dr. James Alatis. Although he had not been involved in the early planning for the National Museum of Language (NML), he was aware that its plans were well advanced in the spring of 1999. Word of her independent proposal soon reached the members of the Board of the NML, who were delighted at the prospect of adding new input to their own ambitious plans.

Arrangements were made for Carpenter to meet with NML President Amelia Murdoch. It was a true “meeting of the minds,” and sharing experiences and insights proved rewarding for both. But at this time Carpenter refrained from reading any of the Museum’s written materials, lest her own proposals be, or seem to be, influenced by this previous work. Subsequent comparisons revealed both similarities and differences in concepts and approaches. At the suggestion of the NML Board of Directors, Carpenter submitted her completed thesis to the Board, which has added it to the many proposals that will be considered in the future planning for the Museum.

Accepting the Board’s invitation to become an Associate, Carpenter quickly became a regular participant in Museum activities. Her background in teaching English as a second language, her employment at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), and her creative and productive mind bring welcome expertise and inspiration. Despite her busy schedule of work at CAL and her doctoral studies at Georgetown (in applied linguistics), she is active on both of the Museum’s committees. A computer-savvy co-editor of the Newsletter, she is a valuable advisor on technical matters as well as a talented writer. As a member of the Web subcommittee, Carpenter looks forward to developing innovative approaches through this medium and to the prospect of attracting new audiences of people of every age to the field of language and linguistics. She has a particular interest in young linguists, and the Museum is indeed fortunate to be able to count her as a supporter and to have her as a guide and role model for the younger generation.

Amelia C. Murdoch

Mike Levin continues...

to get by.”

Furthermore, his wife is a former French cryptolinguist and he had studied French in school, so any French influence should have been apparent. Yet, despite their combined language resources, they could only guess at the possible meanings of the wine glass message.

So Levin went right to the source. He consulted friends in Switzerland. But it was all for naught as they could not pinpoint the words’ meaning either.

Next, Levin decided the mystery required a more authoritative source, perhaps someone who knew about the depth and breadth of the languages spoken in Switzerland. He consulted the cultural affairs office at the Swiss embassy in Washington, D.C. Although intrigued, embassy officials were equally puzzled by the inscription.

Undaunted, Levin went to his computer and surfed the World Wide Web. But, as before, there was no useful information he could use to translate the code on the wine glass. Many people, at this point, might have put the glass away somewhere, deciding it was some sort of hoax. However, Levin had found one last resource to contact: an e-mail address for the Bureau of Tourism for the small Swiss town that had hosted the festival in the first place. He contacted the anonymous person at the end of the hyperlink, and it was this person who helped solve the mystery.

As it turned out, the language printed on the glasses was a little known local mountain dialect of Swiss German, and the message was only further obscured by an offending “typo.”

The meaning of the inscription? Unfortunately, it was still somewhat cryptic, though now through metaphor: “To drink a toast like flirting with the valley.”

Levin comes to the Museum not as a linguist, but as an expert in managing people and operations. He has served on the Board of Directors since 1998. He is a recipient of the National Intelligence Medal and has three children. His interest in helping develop the National Museum of Language is to encourage the study and understanding of languages.

Helen S. Carpenter
Why I Support the National Museum of Language

Like many teachers of language and literature I belong to national language organizations and am affiliated with a regional foreign language conference and my state foreign language association. As a professor of Spanish I am active in discipline-specific organizations, and as an advocate for foreign languages I endorse the work of national advocacy concerns. Such affiliations advance academic activity, stimulate and sustain scholarship, provide motivation and mentoring for practitioners at all levels, and offer a forum for articulation and advocacy. Now, however, a new venue for the interests of those who profess a love of language — the National Museum of Language — promises to project the world of language and linguistics to a wider public by giving language both a home and a horizon.

Plans by the National Museum of Language for an outreach program for young linguists should excite both parents and professionals; the prospect of internships and special opportunities for high school and college students should enthuse language instructors at multiple levels; and the goal of furthering an appreciation of language in government, business, and the citizenry at large should engender commitment from all these constituencies. Here is a chance for all of us in the language, linguistics and literature communities to make an impact at the national level and to help create a more visible profile for the importance of language.

Why do I support the National Museum of Language? I see this support both as a responsibility and a privilege — much like claiming a proud association with one’s heritage. Furthermore, I envision the Museum as a place that can embrace language interests as diverse as those in my own family: a husband who is accomplished in German, Polish, and Russian; a daughter in graduate school in Hispanic Linguistics who has studied Chinese, Maya, and Quechua; and a daughter who is an undergraduate taking up German and Afrikaans in addition to Spanish. My own background includes university study of French, Portuguese, and Latin, in addition to degree work in Spanish. At the National Museum of Language we will all feel welcome.

As global connections make communication through language increasingly important to all, the National Museum of Language will offer a chance for everyone with an interest in languages to become involved and to learn more. It will be a place where young linguists as well as language specialists, tourists as well as translators, leaders as well as learners, and professionals as well as the public will meet and mingle. I encourage you to join and support the National Museum of Language and to be part of the exciting times ahead.

Anne Fountain

Anne Fountain (Ph.D. in Spanish, Columbia University), is Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Peace College. She was born in Argentina, has lived in Mexico and Puerto Rico and is a specialist on Cuba. She has served on the Executive Boards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the Joint National Committee for Languages, and is currently co-director of the national network of Academic Alliances in Foreign Languages.

Annual Workshop continues...

Associate Margaret Reynolds, Executive Director of the Lingistic Society of America (LSA), volunteered to present the NML’s proposal for a web site featuring the Linguistic Heritage of America to the special committee that had been set up in the LSA to provide advice and assistance to the NML. This committee has been waiting for just such a proposal as this. Ann Rossili volunteered to explore in-kind services at the University of Maryland, College Park, for information technology assistance in setting up a diagram of what a generic web site might look like. Associate Allegra Tasaki volunteered to investigate three different IT contacts and provide us with advice as to how to market our web site plan and how to seek possible in-kind services. Secretary Leslie Graham volunteered to explore various presentation possibilities for the Museum at professional conferences. Director Herbert Fockler is to provide President Murdoch with a list of upcoming technology events which the NML might use to develop contacts. Associate Dora Kennedy stated that she would seek time to speak about the NML at the plenary session of the upcoming Northeast Conference on Teaching Foreign Languages to be held in Washington, DC, in April, 2000. The use of “Ask Me About the NML” badges has been successful at past conferences and the decision was made to heighten their effect by having them printed in color.

In closing the session, Dr. Murdoch indicated that she intended to explore local funding ideas to support the printing of new membership brochures, the NML Newsletter, and the Annual Report.

Whitney E. Reed

Note: Since the issue of the last NML Newsletter, donations were received from Ms. Marian M. Jenkins and Mr. Joseph E. Page. Additionally, donations in memory of Arthur S. Salzmann and Mr. John S. Lawrence were received from Mr. and Mrs. Jack D. Jones. A donation in memory of N.G.E.B. Leedy was received from Mr. and Mrs. Whitney E. Reed.
Looking for Volunteers

Volunteers Needed: Interested in contributing to the research and development of the National Museum of Language? With offices conveniently located off Route 1 in College Park, Maryland, and two committees from which to choose, there is a place for anyone interested in becoming involved. Contact Amelia C. Murdoch, NML President, for information on how you can help. E-mail: natlauslang@juno.com. Address: 7100 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 202, College Park, Maryland, 20740. Phone: (301) 864-7071.

She's One of Ours continues...

Language Association. Grahn, a mother of two active young boys, aged 8 and 12, also cooperates with the University of Maryland Department of Education in College Park and accepts student teachers regularly in her school-a collaboration that she values greatly.

Grahn's interest in the National Museum of Language is multi-leveled. The opportunity to become involved in the early stages of a fledgling enterprise was one of the reasons for her accepting the offer to join the Board of Directors of the new Museum. As a teacher, with considerable experience in introducing youngsters to foreign languages (in the language exploratory program offered by her school) Grahn also realized that she could contribute valuable knowledge and experience to the proposed Young Linguists' Program—one of the priorities of the National Museum of Language. Finally, Grahn's energetic involvement with the NML is sustained by the conviction that the Museum has an important mission to fulfill: "I know that the National Museum of Language will be a real resource for students, parents and the business community," says Grahn. And, coming from the Teacher of the Year in Prince George's County, this is a significant endorsement indeed.

Mary P. Herschbach

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Make checks payable to: The National Museum of Language

Annual Membership (calendar year 2000)

- Patron ........................................ $5,000 and up
- Benefactor .................................... $1,000 - $4,999
- Sustainer ....................................... $500 - $999
- Supporting Member ......................... $250 - $499
- Contributing Member ....................... $100 - $249
- Dual/Family Member ....................... $50
- Individual Member ........................ $30
- Student/Senior Member ................... $15
- Corporate Member ........................ $1,000
- Institutional/Organizational Member .... $300

Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
City/State/Zip __________________________
Telephone ______________________________
E-mail ________________________________

The National Museum of Language is officially recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a "non-profit" organization; membership gifts are therefore tax deductible to the full extent authorized under the law.

Revised January 2000

Setting the Stage continues...

"emerge in three dimensions is impossible to describe," says Rossilli. Not surprisingly, the new National Museum of Language has captured her imagination. Rossilli has already begun to visualize the public that will eventually visit the exhibits of the Museum and will assume the roles of learner, spectator, and player. ⚫

Mary P. Herschbach

Planning the Newsletter:
From left - Mary Herschbach, Helen Carpenter, Amelia Murdoch, and Herman Bostick
UPCOMING EVENTS

NML MEETINGS
Board of Directors:
April 13
June 10 (Annual Meeting)
Operations/Facilities Committee:
April 20
June 15
Executive Committee:
May 11
July 13
Administration Committee:
May 18
July 20

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES
NML representatives will be at the following conferences. To identify them, look for our new “Ask me about the National Museum of Language” badges that they will be wearing.

- 47th Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Washington DC
  April 13-16
- Language Analysis and Training Technology Expo at NSA, Ft. Meade, MD
  April 25
- ILR Pre-Conference Presentations, Language and Government Service, Georgetown University
  May 4
- 51st GURT Conference, Language and the Professions, Georgetown University
  May 4-6
- 3rd Annual Conference on Less Commonly Taught Languages (various venues)
  May 6-7, 8
  May 14-18
- Center for Quality Assurance in International Education; Annual Meeting, New Orleans
  May 31; June 2

Please contact Amelia Murdoch at (301) 864-7071 or send email to her at naimuslang@juno.com for other upcoming events and changes.

National Museum of Language
Administrative Offices
7100 Baltimore Avenue
Suite 202
College Park, Maryland 20740

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED