

TESL NS Newsletter

Table of Contents

From the editor.	page 1
President's message.	page 2
TESL Canada rep.	page 4
TESL NS 05 Conference. . .	page 4
Article:	
Bridging Cultures.	page 5
Valentine's Day URLs.	page 5
Student Writings.	page 5

From the Editor

Hello everyone!

This is the Winter-2006 issue of our newsletter. New things galore - a new year, barely begun; a new governor-general; a newly elected new government; and, just around the corner, a new St. Valentine's Day,

*feast of lovers,
lovers old and new,
but more of the latter,
if the poets be true.*

The Chronicle-Herald of February 7 shows a smiling Mr. Steven Harper, who had just been sworn in as our new prime minister. Beside him and applauding, Her Excellency the Right Honorable Michaëlle Jean, our governor-general. They both look like movie stars -- young and good-looking, something heart-warmingly new on the Canadian political scene.

Mr. Harper's command of both English and French, our two official languages, naturally endears him to us who are in the business of teaching language, but we can go him one better. We can present someone who speaks *Franglais*, i.e. both languages at the same time:

*So w'en Sir Wilfrid go to talk
'Bout dem Pacific seal,
Mon Oncle Sam tak' heem one side,
An' mak' some smoot' appeal.*

*"I lak' Canadian, yes, for sure,
I wan' for be your fren'."
We lak' you, too," Sir Wilfrid say,
But only now an' den;*

– From "Sir Wilfrid Laurier -- Diplomatist"
by Alexander MacGregor Rose (1846-1898)



Here we have Uncle Sam in conversation with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of Canada's best-known past prime ministers. May Mr. Harper take to heart what Sir Wilfrid has to say about being friends with Uncle Sam. The whole poem is at

<http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/2553.html>

I have heard that Ms. Carol May, a longtime Executive Director of TESL Canada, has resigned, owing to ill health.. We all wish her a speedy recovery. The new director is Ms. Louise Aerts of Vancouver. A hearty welcome to Ms. Aerts, and congratulations.

TESL Nova Scotia has some new board members learning to work with the not-so-new ones. Check our website, folks; we have several activities coming up, seminars and conferences to help us become even more "developed" professionally. ;). How far do we go for "development"? Perhaps we should keep going as far as the distant places whence our students come. Human expectations and behavior keep changing; to keep pace, our teaching strategies have to change too. TESL Canada, no doubt, will nudge us in the "right" direction.

When I asked my students what they would want for the new year, some of them said, a new world. Accordingly, "If I could re-create the world" became one of the composition topics

for my writing class. A bright Korean student, Sang Hoon Kim, said that the new world according to him would have only one religion, one language and one sex, obviating some of the worst problems bedeviling the current world - wars, break-downs of communication and sexual crimes. Most of the students said their utopia would be a world without pollution, wars, and poverty.

We have the TESL NS President's report from Sandee Thompson and a report from our TESL NS Representative Ellen Pilon. We have contributions from staff and students. Contributions by the latter show both how well they can express themselves in English and how much they have "grown" while learning English in Canada. Would be nice if we had comments from you and lots of contributions for the next issue of our Newsletter. Send them to ay056@chebucto.ns.ca or fbaculi@ns.sympatico.ca, or newsletter@teslns.ca

Let me conclude with a few wishes. I wish Winter, who has been so kind to us, won't suddenly change his mind and treat us to some of the fierce winter weather he has been inflicting on Europe. I wish for, and am looking forward to, an early spring. I wish that we may all be spared, not only the bird flu, but every other kind of flu. I wish everyone a happy St. Valentine's. Most of all, I wish everybody, students and staff, a productive and happy term.

Regards,
Ms. *Fe Leonor Baculi*
(Instructor)
TESL Center, SMU



President's Message

First off, a few expressions of thanks, welcome and congratulations.

Thank you to all out-going board member -- Darlene, MacInnis, Carol Derby, Sandy Crocker (now in Thailand), Matt Reesor (now in Kingston) and Joanne Newton (presently in Beirut). Congratulations to Matt, Sandy and Joanne on their new positions. We appreciate all that you did while on the board and wish you well in your future adventures!

Welcome to all new board members. As in the past, we have attempted to ensure that we have a well represented board. Schools and school boards were contacted last summer and spring once we knew who was planning to leave the board.

Please join me in welcoming the following board members:

Emily Amos (St. Anne and St. Mary's) - Member at Large
Sarah Sampara (Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre) - Membership Secretary
Angela Campbell (International Language Institute) - Treasurer
Christine Grimshire and Brandan McNeill, (Canadian Language Learning College) - Members at Large
Erica Butler (Halifax Regional Libraries) - Member at Large

Back again are: Beth Vye (Vice President), Ellen Pilon (TESL Canada Representative), Jill Maclean (Recording Secretary), Fe Baculi (Newsletter Editor) and Sandee Thompson (President).

Tesl NS Conference (Fall 2005). Our conference this fall was a great success. Rebecca Oxford joined us from the USA as our plenary speaker and gave a very informative plenary talk on learning strategies (taking us through its history and expanding on [points of

interest)). She also gave a workshop in the last time slot Saturday afternoon which helped us with the more practical aspects of the theme. There was a wide variety of workshops presented -- everything from Canadian Language Benchmarks, to practical classroom activities and more theoretical discussions. The feedback on the conference was extremely favourable, despite the fact that a few members were not able to get in to the workshops they had originally asked for.

As a result of the feedback, we are once again planning changes for the next conference that should accommodate everyone's need; we are hoping to have slightly larger rooms so that if someone should not get their choice, and should the presenter be ok with it, they will be able to join the workshop of their choice. The most important thing here is to remember that we HAVE TO tell the hotel one week in advance who is coming to the conference in order for them to be able to provide the correct amount of refreshments. The other problem we ran into was people paying after the conference instead of at the time of registration. This meant that those people were placed in workshops after those who paid. Therefore, the lesson here is if you want to ensure a place, please register and pay early.

Despite the two month break between our November and January board meetings, this has been a busy time for the board. We are in the process of planning: the mini-conference this spring; the fall conference in October or November; and the TESL Canada conference in 2008.

The theme of the mini-conference is going to be "Learning strategies: the practical side of things", though the name is yet to be decided. We will either have three or four back to back workshops, as we have done the last two years and it will be held at the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre. Dates to be announced soon so check this web site!

The theme of our fall conference and dates are yet to be decided but we have a great plenary speaker lined up! We will be holding it at the Westin again.

The TESL Canada 2008 conference is going to be a joint effort between TESL NB and TESL NS. The four co-chairs met early in January to visit the site and to get the basic planning underway. The theme is going to be "Discourse" and the conference will take place at the Hotel Beausejour in Moncton, New Brunswick midway between the majority of schools in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. TESL NB's focus will be on the physical location, on-site registration, outside events, equipment etc. TESL NS's will be presenters, schedules and on-line registration. If you would like to volunteer either in the planning stages or as we get closer to the event, please email the webmaster or feel free to contact me at dos.english@ili.ca

So, another exciting year planned. If you would like to be a presenter at either of the conferences, please let us know. If there is something you would like to see happening with the board etc., please let us know that as well.

Please note. The new standards for TESL Canada Certification are already on the TESL Canada website since Feb. 6, 2006. TESL Canada would like to apologize for the delay in evaluation applications and getting the site changed.

Take good care and we hope to see you in the spring,

Sandee Thompson
TESL NS President

TESL Canada Rep Report

I was unable to attend the Board meeting held in Calgary in November because of the cost, so was out of the loop for many decisions made at that time. I'm still trying to catch up.

First of all, the new Standards are just recently ready, as of February 6th. No one has been able to apply for TESL Canada certification since January 1st.

Information currently on the TESL Canada website regarding standards and approved schools is not completely up-to-date. Many teaching centres across Canada offer practicum courses that meet that requirement set by TESL Canada. It is cheaper to take a stand-alone practicum course if your degree/course is missing this component. Details will eventually appear on the TESL Canada website, so check it out if your practicum is missing or inadequate.

Recent news is that Carol May, long time Executive Director of TESL Canada, is quite sick. She has been the backbone of the organization for many years. She gave her retirement notice in May 2005 and has been training her replacement since September. The new CEO is Louise Aerts of Vancouver. Long discussions on the future of the TESL Canada Journal continue as the new editor, John Sivell of Brock University in Ontario, starts thinking about his takeover from Sandra Kouritzen of University of Manitoba. This will happen in June, more or less. There is agreement that a web version of the journal is necessary, but disagreement about how to do this. Thus the print version continues for a while yet.

Ellen Pilon

TESL NS Conference 2005: Navigating Strategies: Pointing Learners in the Right Direction

Once again the committee tried to improve the Conference. Whereas last year (2004) we held the Friday buffet dinner and plenary at the Lord Nelson Hotel and Saturday workshops at International Language Institute, this year (2005) the entire conference was held at the Westin Nova Scotian. The 2006 Conference will again be at the Westin Hotel, although in a slightly different format.

A few problems arose: the Saturday Rebecca Oxford workshop was held in a room that was too small, a situation that occurred because of higher than expected attendance; the publishers' room was too small. Fortunately Oxford University Press chose not to attend, despite repeated invitations, so the publishers room situation was not too severe. The 2006 conference will be better prepared.

Friday afternoon sessions proved popular and were well attended. The conference began with a stimulating workshop given by Julian L'Enfant, followed by the energetic plenary speaker, Rebecca Oxford. Liquid refreshment, enjoyed by many, preceded the sit-down dinner. The dessert caused considerable speculation on its sauce: yes, it was a vinegar flavouring. The dessert was called "kahlua chocolate mousse served in a lace cookie cup with fresh strawberries in a vanilla bean infused balsamic reduction". Mystery solved.

Rebecca Oxford delighted everyone with her enthusiasm and vitality, both during the plenary Friday afternoon and the workshop Saturday afternoon. Other workshops were also popular, according to feedback, although a few were shorter than expected.

Ellen Pilon

Bridging Cultures

As the fog settles in over Halifax Harbour, Min Li thinks about the bridge he engineered near Beijing. The sound of the fog horn interrupts his memories of his past and he is left wondering about his future in Nova Scotia. Min Li is one of the 212 internationally educated engineers who have come to Nova Scotia in the past five years.

Internationally educated engineers are men and women with engineering qualifications obtained from outside of Canada, have recently immigrated to Canada, have an engineering degree and engineering work experience from their home country and want to continue their engineering career in Canada.

We learned from the From Consideration to Integration Final Report that employers report lack of language proficiency and cultural differences as the main reason that internationally educated engineers experience difficulties in the workplace or are not hired. The Communications and Orientation Program for Internationally Educated Engineering Professionals is designed to address this pressing need. As a pilot project offered through the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre, the program aims to improve workplace technical English communication skills. The program offers opportunities to practice giving precise definitions of engineering concepts, describing objects and processes, delivering oral presentations, business writing, technical writing, networking, team skills, and developing clear speaking skills. The program also gives an overview of engineering in Nova Scotia including law and ethics, labour market information, professional practice, health and safety, workplace culture, licensure information. By the end of the program the engineers will have significantly improved their technical communication skills and thereby enhanced their employability.

Participants will also have opportunities to participate in job search and interviewing skills workshops as well as in mentorship and volunteer job placement programs offered through the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association.

Kathy Burnett

For more information contact Kathy Burnett, Program Coordinator, at the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (442-2937 ext 234).

Valentines Day Activities:

selected by *Sarah Sampara*

Idioms lessons:

http://www.english-to-go.com/english/samples/ww_true_false.cfm

http://www.everythingsl.net/lessons/valentine_hearts.php

St Valentine's Story:

<http://www.isabelperez.com/St.ValentineReading.htm>



Student Writings

How the Japanese Celebrate Valentine's Day

Many people in Japan celebrate Valentine's Day. It is a special day for people to show their love to people they love -- boy/girlfriends, husbands, or wives. Our way of celebrating it is different from that of the western way. The Japanese girls give the boys presents which are mostly chocolates. In this way, we can enjoy celebrating before, during and after Valentine's Day.

Before Valentine's Day, many shops make special kinds of chocolates. They are expensive and delicious ones. Most girls prefer to buy than to make chocolates by themselves. It is also fun to try each one of them before you choose which one to buy. Because some kinds of chocolates are sold only on Valentine's season, many girls buy them for themselves.

On Valentine's Day, girls give the beautifully-wrapped chocolates to their special people like their boyfriends, fathers or male co-workers. This is a very important day for a girl to tell a boy that she likes him. This is an important day for the boys too because they care about how many chocolates they would get from girls. The more chocolates the better; it means they have more girls who care about them.

After Valentine's Day, you can buy these special chocolates, cheaper; thus, it is a good time to buy them. There is also a day when boys give girls presents in return. It's every 14th of March. This is called the "White Day". Shortly after Valentine's Day, the boys start to think about what they are going to give. Even though girls give boys only chocolates, the girls expect to be given valuable things specially if they are a couple. The girls who told the boys that they like them by giving them chocolates will be waiting nervously for the boys' reply.

So you see, Valentine's Day celebration for us is actually before, during and after Valentine's Day.

Kanako Yoshikawa
(student/Japan)
TESL Center/SMU

Growing Up Again

I've been staying in Halifax as an overseas student for around 3 months. Now I realize that I've been changing recently. When I came here I felt that I had returned to a child, because I couldn't do anything by myself. For example, I didn't know how to use Canadian coin and how to take a bus. Also I couldn't communicate with people well because of the poverty of my English.

Although I wasn't scared of my host mother, I was scared of conversation with her. In fact, I immediately lost weight. I couldn't eat much with talking with her, because I was too nervous. I could rest from the tension only while I was with cats because of no English conversation.

Also I was scared of the telephone. When I was home alone, I wanted to pull the telephone line off, but I didn't. Even though I could pretend to be out, I didn't. I think I really made my host mother's friends confused.

In addition, I avoided taking a bus. Fortunately my house and my school are very close so I don't need a bus. As a result, unfortunately I became a person who can't take a bus. I was afraid that I might mistake a bus and be lost forever.

I often go to a library in Japan, so I do that here too. I could barely get a library card, but the card was available for only using the Internet, so I couldn't borrow books and CDs. I needed two IDs for the regular card; however, I didn't know that.

Like the above, my ability as a pupil, no, Canadian pupils were much better than me. Then I strived to solve those problems. First of all, I tried to tell my host mother the happenings which I had outside including school. Of course she knew about my school, but she didn't know well about classes and students, so I had to explain that to her clearly. Whenever something outside happened to me, I got to think how I could describe it for her. Since my host mother is patient, she waited for my words, so I had to speak until the end. I went on talking every day. One day I noticed that I had been relaxing by talking with her. Also I told her about my family, friends in Japan, my purpose and so on. Then she could understand my character well. My weight didn't return but it's good for me. I can keep my weight. The reason is not nervousness, it's my host mother's nutritional dishes.

Second of all, I tried taking the bus. It's much easier than I thought. It's no wonder, if it was difficult to use the bus, nobody would take it. Now I can use the bus and transfer to another bus and go to a distant library.

Third, I got a regular library card. I asked the librarian and got the card, asked how to use the computer and how to borrow books and CDs, etc. After all, I just feared to do something before doing it. If I didn't understand something, I could ask someone and check by myself. Now I'm taking a lecture at a library. To be honest, I can't understand it well, because the lecture is too difficult for me. However, I go on taking it. Challenge to do something is the most important for me.

Finally, it's about the telephone. I want to say that I can speak well on a phone, but I can't say that. Although I'm not nervous when a phone rings, I can't speak well. I still make people confused on a phone now. Nevertheless, I think I've become a junior high school student now.

Studying abroad is a big challenge for everyone and the effort will change to good or bad depending on ourselves. Taking a bus, going to a library, answering a phone, each of them is merely a small thing. However, the little confidence must make me recognize that I can do everything that I want. Tackling without fear can enable us to make our life easier.

Mariko Arai
(Student/Japan)
ILI

Studying in Halifax

Halifax, the capital region of Nova Scotia, is beautiful and quiet city. It's small city but it's very good for studying. A lot of people come from different countries to study English in Halifax, so it has a lot of English schools. My school is the International Language Institute.

Studying at ILI is one the best experience one can have in life; it has a mixture of different cultures that make you learn English quickly. Besides that you can get much information about the other cultures. The students at ILI are kind and friendly so they will help you if you have a problem any time. The teachers at ILI are helpful and they do hard work to transport the information to students in an easy way. However, the social activities that the school has every Friday are very useful for learning English and having fun. Finally, the bad thing that happens at ILI and everywhere is when the students leave the school. It's really a bad time, but at the same time it is happy when they graduate from ILI.

In conclusion, all the students spend a good time at ILI, so I hope many students come to ILI to study English. In my opinion ILI is not just a school but it's contact with a family.

Abdulrahman Al Ketbi
(Student/ UAE)
ILI

Baan Thai Restaurant Review

Baan Thai Restaurant is one of a few places where you can enjoy Thai cuisine in Halifax. This restaurant is located in Dresden Row near Spring Garden Road. You can enjoy hot tasty seafood and vegetables. As for the prices of combined menus, they are a little expensive, but simple dishes are reasonable prices. Tom Yancoo is a soup I recommend. You can choose the degree of hotness according to your own tastes. In this soup, shrimp, vegetables, and some meat are included; thus it is healthy and delicious. If you are hungry, you can order it with chicken rice. In addition, with respect to the atmosphere of this restaurant, the décor is quiet and calm. The waitresses are very friendly, so you can ask them what kinds of food are good or how to make a reservation. I highly recommend this restaurant!

Tetsushi Takahashi

(Student/Japan)

TESL Center/SMU

Saying Good-bye

Today my best friend has just gone back to Japan. I went to the airport with her to say good-bye. At 5:30 in the morning we arrived there. There was delight that people were meeting and reuniting, but I had a feeling of sadness for her leaving at that time. I told her that an airport had a mood of parting. She said that it also had a feeling of joy for reunion and going forth. I replied that it was just sad to me then. She smiled sadly.

As time went on, my sadness was deeper. I couldn't try to hide my feelings. I couldn't say anything. She noticed my feelings. She gave me a clap on my head. "Don't make such a sad face," she told me. I looked down. I understood that it was a new bright life for her, going back home and renewing her job. I knew this, but there were so many memories between her and me. Even though we had only three

months together, she became a best friend for me.

If I had not come to ILI, I would not have met her. We live in the same country, but it does not necessarily mean we could meet in Japan. It was a stroke of good luck to meet each other.

She told me, "I have to go." I hugged her. I couldn't stop crying. I couldn't do anything but say "Thank you." She cried, too. She told me, "We are sure to meet in Japan." I said, "Yes." After we said good-bye, I couldn't stop crying for a while. I recognized again that she was a precious friend for me.

There are meetings and good-byes in our life. I met many people at ILI; it means there are also partings. I never knew that I would feel so deeply sad at parting. Otherwise, I think I must reassure the meetings. I have heard from somewhere that there is a limit to meeting people. If it were true, I would do all the more.

"Meeting is the fortune," she wrote for me on a card. I think so, too. Now she is still on the way home. She has gone home with hope in the future.

Megumi Kawaguchi

(Student/Japan)

ILI



My Utopia

Some say that the present world is a bad world because it has wars, it lacks money and its natural resources are continually depleted. So, everyone wants to have a perfect world. For me, what actually makes a perfect world is the mind. If people just use their minds properly, our world becomes perfect.

I have four ideas to help make a perfect world: end all wars; speak one international language;

unite all people; and share modern technology to all people of the world.

First, exterminate all wars in the world. We all witness what is happening to people in war-torn countries. They are dying because of bullets, bombs, and missiles which are fired everyday. Most of the victims are the male members of the family, but even children and mothers die too. We have to end this in order to have a perfect world.

Second, we should just have one common language for everybody. People suffer from having too many different languages. They can't understand each other. For example, if an English speaking American goes to South America and he can't speak Spanish or Portuguese, he will be in trouble without an honest interpreter.

Third, uniting all people as one makes them act as one. We have to act as one hand in order to live in peace and quiet. People who try to spoil this idea actually exist; however, the good will eventually triumph at the end.

Finally, modern technological and specially its benefits have to be shared to all nations. It is not fair that one country has it all and more countries have very little or nothing at all.

In conclusion, we can actually have a perfect world by just doing these ideas: ending fights and wars, uniting people, using one common language, and by distributing technological benefits to the world specially to the less developed countries. We really need to live in peace; more peace means more happiness. This is almost a perfect world for me.

Ibrahim Al Senni
(Student / Kuwait)
TESL Center, SMU

