President’s Perspective
Kent L. Zimmerman
As I approach the mid-way mark of my presidency in the International Listening Association, my focus is slowly shifting from accomplishing the goals that were announced at the Tucson Convention and shared with the Executive Board to an exploration of the present and future health of the organization. Each new ILA President is given the gavel that represents the heritage of the Association. The gavel ceremony symbolizes the expectation that the incoming President will not only sustain the unique mission but also enhance the vitality of the ILA.
For many people, the number one issue facing the ILA is the membership trend over the past ten years. How many people joined ILA this year? How many renewed their memberships? What efforts are we engaged in to attract and retain members? Why are we not expanding the target audience?
Interestingly, Patrick Lencioni, author of the book, The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business has a very different take. He opines:

If someone were to offer me one single piece of evidence to evaluate the health of an organization, I would not ask to see its financial statements, review its product line, or even talk to its employees or customers; I would want to observe the leadership team during a meeting. This is where values are established, discussed, and lived and where decisions around strategy and tactics are vetted, made, and reviewed. Bad meetings are the birthplace of unhealthy organizations, and good meetings are the origin of cohesion, clarity, and communication.

Lencioni continues his commentary with the observation that “healthy organizations are void of politics and confusion.” Even though these organizations will have conflicts and challenging issues, satisfactory resolutions are reached more quickly because the group members are not bogged down by dysfunctional behaviors and hidden agendas.
One of my first acts as President in March was to ask the members of the Executive Board to look at the ILA Mission, identify a key strength and a notable concern in their particular area of responsibility, describe one concrete, measurable goal that each member intended to accomplish this year, and explain the connection between that goal and the ILA Mission. I was pleased with how your Executive Board responded to and completed that request. During each Board meeting this year, the Executive Board members are asked to report on their goals so they can be held accountable to each other.
During our Executive Board meetings, we have lively exchanges on various topics that impact the Association. We do not have unanimous agreement on every issue. We are guided by the reality that once the vote is taken; the majority decision of the Board is the decision of the Board. It is time to accept the vote and support the Association.
Plan Now for 2017 Convention

Charles Veenstra

Now is the time to serious work on your proposals for the June 7-10, 2017 convention. For some of you, it may not be too late to apply for funding from your institution. The important dates and deadlines have been posted on the ILA web page, but here they are again:

Workshops or Short Course: January 10, 2017
Papers/panels/posters: February 1, 2017

As a teacher, I often told my students that if they were worried about their papers, they could submit a draft to me well in advance of the paper due date and I would give them feedback before they wrote their final draft. I offer the same to anyone who would like feedback before the deadline for the ILA proposals.

The theme of the convention, “Listening for Healing,” seems to have generated significant interest. I would love to see proposals for how listening promotes healing in family relationships, education, business, health care, church, and even in politics—although to get people to listen in our present poisoned political environment seems a huge challenge. But maybe some of you have some good ideas on how we could promote listening to heal between opposing views in politics.

Omaha in June has much to offer for family vacations. We will be meeting in the downtown area near many attractions within walking distance. Old Market has many shops and eating places—again within walking distance from the hotel. The world famous Henry Doorly zoo surely would interest most people, particularly children. Free shuttles within 3 miles of the hotel are available. So, take the family along and combine stimulating panels with family time. This is an opportunity for you to promote healing in your busy life by taking relaxing time listening with those you love.

Traditionally, airfares at the Omaha airport have been cheaper than surrounding airports, so I suggest you book your flights early so you can get the best fares. Omaha is served by the following airlines: Alaska, American, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, and United. By car, downtown Omaha is easily accessible from Interstate 29 and 80.

Times are Changing!

Kent L. Zimmerman

I can only imagine what the International Listening Association was like when it began 38 years ago. No emails; no cell phone calls; no websites; no virtual committee meetings, and no social media presence.

After the ILA Business Committee researched the importance of a virtual presence to our existing and potential clientele, one of the priorities of the Executive Board was to address this deficiency. Thanks to the stellar leadership of Helen Ralston, the First Vice-President Elect, the ILA website has been revised and updated. That was a fantastic first step, but we could not stop there. We had to drive people to the visually attractive website and then provide current information about the Association once people checked us out.

The next task was two-fold. We needed to hire a Web Editor who understood what a dynamic website needed, and then we needed to find a Social Media Coordinator (or two) to work with the Web Editor and post relevant items on the various social media venues, like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Thanks to the recommendation of an ad hoc committee comprised of Nan Johnson-Curiskis, Michael Z Murphy and Helen Ralston, the Executive Board hired Nicole Bodin as our new Web Editor last month. The interview committee was impressed with her technical skills and communication abilities. We then investigated the benefits of a social media presence. Those included:

a) Social media posts drive the traffic to the website;
b) Search Engine Optimization is enhanced by a strong social media presence;
c) Brand loyalty is built through social media;
d) Social media is a method of finding people we could not have found; and
e) It is free!

Rather than piling this time-consuming task upon the shoulders of the Web Editor, we began our search for a Social Media Coordinator. After a brief delay, Chris Bond and Sherry Wien, professors with aspiring students, stepped forward with an amazingly appealing offer.

Both professors recommended qualified students for the newly created position of Social Media Coordinators for ILA from October 1st through August 15, 2017. Not only will these students monitor and manage the social media platforms for the Association, they will coordinate the message with the Web Editor. The goal is to capture the attention of the individuals on social media, drive the people to the website, show them what the ILA has to offer and invite them to join us.

Chris Bond’s two students, Gillian Evans and Cole McMillian, have agreed to develop a self-sustaining model on social media so when their responsibilities end next April, the Association will not be back at square one. These students will present their research at the Omaha Convention.
Sherry Wien’s student will manage the social media traffic during the all-important summer months when the information on the Convention is promoted at its peak. Her student will be completing a thorough research paper at the end of that internship as well.

The International Listening Association members made their voices heard at Tucson: ILA needs to get involved in social media – now! The social media train left the station, and ILA was still standing in line at the ticket booth. Thanks to the hard work of many people, this member request is fast becoming a reality.

**What Have You Done Since Tucson?**

Kent L. Zimmerman

A membership in the International Listening Association has multiple benefits. One has access to the latest research in listening; one has direct access to some of the finest teachers, innovators and practitioners in listening; and one has the opportunity to nurture and mentor the next generation of listening professionals. Members practice and refine the skills that the rest of the world craves – the ability to listen.

Memberships are also the life blood to the ILA revenue stream. These revenues allow the Board to pay the bills, offer programs of interest to the membership, like the International Day of Listening, and pre-pay for services at the next Convention.

During the closing luncheon at the Tucson Convention, I challenged the members in attendance to invite someone to become a member in the International Listening Association. I urged attendees to consider one family member, one colleague, or one disagreeable neighbor as a potential ILA member.

I made a pledge. I said that if I was unsuccessful in getting someone to purchase an ILA membership by June 30th, I would personally pay for someone’s membership. I kept my promise, and ILA has a new member. That raises an interesting question: what is stopping you for challenging yourself to invite someone to become a new member by a specific date? If you are not successful in inviting someone, commit to buying a gift membership to ILA. If you cannot afford a regular membership, buy a young person a student membership. The key is that you have to announce your promise so you become accountable. Silent promises do not work.

Here is where I come in. Email me with your promise. I promise to keep you accountable. I promise to send you an invoice on the deadline date you choose. I promise to send you a renewal reminder (even on the gift memberships) in one year. So, are you up to the challenge? Do you believe enough in the mission and values of the International Listening Association to take this promise step?

Anyone who accepts my membership challenge will be publicly recognized in Omaha. We will applaud you for your efforts. I would be delighted to see my Inbox overflowing with promises after this article is published.

**New Listening Book Hits the Stands**

By Helen Ralston

The publication of a new listening textbook ’Listening Across Lives’ It contains chapters by ILA members Andrew Wolvin, Laura Janusik, Margarete Imhof, Chris Bond, Rick Bommelje and Kay Lindahl will appear the week of November 14, 2016. It is co-edited by another ILA Member Molly Stoltz. The book is published by Kendall-Hunt and will be available as an e-book as well as a bound book.
First Vice President
Anita Dorczak
I have been listening to my clients’ stories for over twenty-five years and what I hear most is that their conflict stems from their inability to listen to each other in a meaningful way. I am a lawyer and mediator who has been working with families from various cultural backgrounds in three languages.

At my first ILA convention, I became a member and signed up for the CLP program. The following year I signed up for life membership. I was immensely impressed with what the ILA has to offer and how diverse and inclusive it is.

It will be an honour for me to become the First Vice President Elect and to contribute to further growth of the ILA. It will be my goal for the ILA to attract more international membership, to promote the practice of teaching and listening in different countries and build good working relationships with other organizations, including those in the conflict resolution field, so a new appreciation of the power of listening could emerge across borders and disciplines.

Anita Dorczak, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D.
Barrister & Solicitor
Certified Elder Mediator
Registered Collaborative Family Lawyer
Certified Parenting Coordinator
Certified in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
Certified Listening Professional

Member-At-Large (Global)
Corine Jansen
My name is Corine Jansen. I was born in 1968 in The Netherlands. I am a humanist, a life-long student in stoicism. I work as Chief Listening Officer in healthcare. I want to make a change in this world through the power of listening.

I have been a part of the ILA organization for four years, gone through the CLP program, and notice the potential this organization can offer. I am proud of the Special Recognition Award the ILA gave me in 2015.

Our world has become full of aggressive politics, polarization, demonization, simplistic answers, superficiality and disconnect. Our world needs a revolution. A revolution of humanity, empathy, connection and compassion.

We must listen and listen and listen. We must listen for the truth in our opponent, and we must acknowledge it. After we have listened long enough, openly enough, and with the desire to really hear, we may be given the opportunity to speak our truth. We may even have the opportunity to be heard. (Gene Knudsen Hoffman, from her essay, “Speaking Truth to Power”)

My vision for ILA is to become a SPIRITED GLOBAL organization. We have so much to offer in regards to listening. Therefore, we need being grounded and moving forward again. If you want to change, you need to make changes. We have a wealth of knowledge within our organization, and we need to share this knowledge with the world. We believe in the global opportunities and power of listening to make this world more human.

The ILA should be known as THE GLOBAL ORGANIZATION THAT PRACTICES, RESEARCHES AND TEACHES LISTENING.
I am a Communication Instructor at Dordt College. I have been a part of the ILA organization for many years, gone through the CLP program, and have experienced the wonderful relationships this organization offers. I’m passionate about listening and the ILA. I have had the joy of serving as the ILA Secretary for past 4 years and would count it a privilege to continue to serve as the secretary. It is important to be fiscally responsible to our organization. While on the Executive Board, I have gained an immense knowledge and appreciation for this great organization.

My vision for ILA is to continue to be a vibrant organization globally. This organization has much to offer to the world in regards to listening. As a member of the Executive Committee, I will continue to work to assist the ILA to be seen as a resource for providing listening education to all entities educational institutions, health care organizations, businesses etc.

It is my goal that the ILA will also be seen as a model for demonstrating effective listening in all cultures and contexts. We have a wealth of knowledge within our organization, and we need to share this knowledge of the power of listening with others. The ILA should be known as the organization that practices, researches and teaches listening.

ILA needs a strategic plan for public relations. I have structural ideas to form an active Public Relations Committee comprised of ILA members and the Executive Board. This committee will promote: 1) what we offer during a convention, 2) participation in the next convention, 3) membership and networking, 4) special events, and 5) publications for research, education, and practice.

My goal is to create and implement an 18 month strategic plan. Within two years, the ILA membership can see if the strategic plan was successful. With the work of the PR Committee, the strategic plan will: 1) set goals and objectives connected to ILA’s vision, 2) identify our target audience, 3) choose key social media platforms, 4) create content strategies, 5) create a content editorial calendar, and 6) set up tracking to measure results. The PR Committee will meet quarterly (6 times during the term) to review the plan and make adjustments.

ILA has plenty of people with “fuel” to provide content. We need PR committee members to be the “rubber on the road” who have social media skills. If we create an organized system that combines content with promotion, then we get the “engine running.” I am willing to be the “steering wheel” as the Member-At-Large for Public Relations but the wheel does not make the car move. One person cannot do everything just like a car cannot move with one tire. We all need to be functioning parts to “drive forward.”
Christopher Bond (no photo given)

Dr. Christopher Bond is an Associate Professor at Missouri Western State University where he serves as the director of learning communities and applied learning in addition to his faculty duties. He has been a member of ILA for 11 years and served in numerous board and committee chair positions during his membership, including organizing and forming the Healthcare committee, reviewer for the IJL, and co-organized a health and listening continuing education seminar. He is also a past president of ILA and recently won the Synergy Award for innovative listening research. He has served on the nomination committee in previous years.

Dr. Teri Varner

I am a tenured Associate Professor of Communication at St. Edward’s University (SEU) in Austin, Texas. I completed my Ph.D. in Communication with an emphasis in Performance Studies from the University of Texas at Austin in May, 2003. I teach courses such as communication theory, nonverbal communication, public speaking and SEU’s first (3) credit hour undergraduate course: COMM 2357 Active Listening. My ethnographic qualitative research interests range from women of color in American higher education, to hair/body politics, to listening to adolescents and young adult (AYAs) cancer survivors. My most current collaborative research with Dr. Laura Janusik examines what metacognitive listening strategies do U.S. American students report using. I joined the International Listening Association (ILA) in March 25, 2013. I am an active member of National Communication Association (NCA) and the International Listening Association (ILA). Over the past three years, I have consulted and networked with notable scholars such as Drs. Andrew Wolvin, Melissa Beall, Graham Bodie, Christopher Bond, Philip Tirpak and my ILA mentor, Laura Janusik. I have chaired numerous panels with many of these distinguished scholars and was a first-time attendee and presenter at the ILA’s 37th Annual Convention in Tucson, Arizona. In 2016, I was asked to serve as a reviewer for International Journal of Listening by Editor, Margarete Imhof, Ph.D. In addition to presenting at national conferences, I also presented at the 1st European Listening and Healthcare Conference, Nijmegen, Netherlands. I would like to continue to serve as one of the members of the Nominating Committee because the field of listening is vast. If chosen, you can expect me to continue, “advancing the practice, teaching, and research of listening throughout the world,”… the mission and vision of ILA.

Kay Lindahl

It has been my pleasure to participate in the ILA Conferences for the past 14 years or so. It is one of my favourite meetings – I always learn something new and meet the most interesting people.

I have been a listening practitioner since 1997, when I started The Listening Center. My particular work is teaching and training people how to prepare to listen. We explore listening as a sacred art and a spiritual practice. I am the author of “The Sacred Art of Listening” and “Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening” both published by SkyLight Paths Publishing. I have also written chapters in several books.

I have served on the Nominating Committee before and would be honoured to serve again.

Michael Murphy (no photo given)

Michael Z Murphy’s first contact with ILA was at a NY/NJ Regional ILA meeting as organized by Wayne Bond at Montclair State. There, Carole Grau was the keynote. He promptly fell in love with both Carole and the ILA. He sensed immediately the organization would change his life, and indeed it has. Serving on the Nominating Committee would be a way to repay the ILA for those contributions, both professional and personal.

Murphy is a life member and a C.L.P. He has attended conventions since the mid-80s, and has made numerous presentations (often with Daniel R. Corey) at both the Internationals and the Regionals. He has served on the Nominating Committee once before when it was chaired by Jennie Grau; he has also organized and hosted a regional ILA conference at Union County College where he teaches various communication classes. He currently
serves on the ILA Education Committee and the Executive Board as MAL-PR. Murphy states, “I would be proud to carry on the work of ILA as a member of the Nominating Committee as, together, we march deeper into the 21st century - a century where listening skills are more needed than ever before. And yes, even though I have no private server at home, I approved this message.”

**Kathy O’Brien**

I’ve been a Nominating Committee member this past year and have enjoyed the role. I’d be honored to join the committee again in 2017.

This committee’s work is very important. We must identify talent to help build, sustain and breathe constant new life into ILA’s work. It’s been rewarding to talk with nominees. I’ve learned more about the ILA and about its very special membership.

I came to ILA as a communications trainer five years ago. I train executives in a range of communications skills including presentations, persuasion, executive presence and media interviews. I also teach negotiations at an MBA school in Thailand. I’m based in Singapore.

**Best Practices in Teaching Listening.**

**Education Short Course at the 2017 ILA Convention in Omaha**

by Melissa Beall

The ILA Education Committee will hold a pre-convention short course in Omaha, Wednesday, June 7, 2017. Tentative presenters include: Mary Lahman, Charles Fischer, Danny Combs, Phil Tirpak, Michael Z Murphy, Andrew Wolvin, and Melissa Beall.

The schedule:
- **Registration** – Noon – 1:00 p.m.
- **Session One** – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- **Refreshment/Washroom Break** - 3:00-3:15 p.m.
- **Session Two** - 3:15- 5:15 p.m.
- **Wrap-Up** - 5:15-5:30 p.m.

The short course is limited to 25 participants. Registration fees are $100 to cover room and refreshment costs. The content is suitable for anyone who wishes to add ideas to a listening class, add listening to other courses, or create a new listening course.

Please help us publicize this event and encourage interested persons to attend.

Questions? Please contact Melissa L. Beall at: Melissa.Beall@uni.edu
Phone 319-273-2992

**Example of a basic communication-course book with a strong listening emphasis.**

Look at the beautiful Omaha Skyline.

There is so much happening in Omaha at the ILA convention that is a must see. Have you made your plans yet?
The First International Day of Listening
Sheila C. Bentley

We did it! We had our first International Day of Listening on Thursday, September 15, 2016, and we had participation from around the world!

We achieved a number of milestones prior to the event that made it possible to have the IDL. We established mission and vision statements and strategic goals, and developed and launched a website, a Facebook Page, and Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, which enabled us to get the word out. (Visit the webpage www.internationaldayoflistening.com to access these.)

ILA members submitted activities for the website in three categories (Education, Personal, and Professional), and we had at least 10 activities in each category. We also provided options for several possible events, and a list of resources was included.

We promoted the event to our own ILA members, as well as on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Several people also wrote blogs that promoted the event. We also sent press releases to a number of newspapers and TV and radio outlets.

Some of the participation included:

- Some people celebrated with their families by inviting family members to a special conversation or offered to listen to a family member.
- Corine Jansen engaged the largest bank in the Netherlands, Rabobank, and they not only participated in the International Day of Listening, they also had a four-week campaign about listening and empathy and ended by having Corine deliver a lecture about listening and empathy at the University of Tilburg for the management of the bank.
- Jennifer Romig posted a special article on her Listen Like a Lawyer blog (see listenlikealawyer.com), and the discussion is continuing.
- Greg Enos and Molly Stolz offered free listening instruction. Molly also had her students participate by offering Free Listening to passersby (see photos).
- Kittie Watson sent an email to her clients and challenged them to reach out and demonstrate their value to others by having an intentional listening conversation and rather than focusing on what they had or wanted to say, engage someone else to “talk” by asking open-ended questions and then listen to the answers.
- The school district in Collierville, TN, distributed materials to the language arts teachers in all eight schools in Collierville and asked them to participate in the IDL activity of their choice. This involved over 8000 students!
- The town government in Collierville hosted a Free Listening session at the library where citizens could come and share concerns about environmental issues—and be heard.
- Sardool Singh arranged a program in a social institute. He said it was a great day and that people appreciated listening and also pledged to promote listening from now onwards understanding how important it is. All types of listening activities were done and even the children enjoyed them a lot.
- Mary Lahman’s students participated in a number of ways, but several of them posted listening quotes on their social media sites, and others held special listening sessions with roommates or other friends.
- Avinash Choudhari of India wrote a blog for the awareness of listening and posted it on his social media sites. He also promoted a one-hour active listening activity for his friends. The link for his blog is http://avinash2611.blogspot.in/2016/09/active-listening.html?m=1
- Laura Janusik offered her students extra credit and a variety of ways to participate. Many of them chose to do a tech free meal and were amazed at how much more they picked up! Laura’s favorite, though, was the young woman who called her Mom while she was doing nothing else...not driving, studying, playing computer games, eating, etc., and they talked for an hour!
- Andy Wolvin held a discussion of IDL in his senior seminar on listening and encouraged his 50 instructors teaching sections of their basic communication course (2600 students) to do something with IDL.

Many thanks to all of you who participated in our first International Day of Listening and to those who submitted activities. Special thanks go to the following for making the event happen: Corine Jansen, Margarete Imhof, Laura Janusik, Andy Wolvin, Helen Ralston, Nan Johnson-Curiskis, Kent Zimmerman, Susan Timm, and Lou Hampton.
IDL activities
ILA OFFICERS

President                      Kent Zimmerman
1st VP                        Charles Veenstra
1st VP Elect                  Helen Ralston
Secretary                    Kae Van Engen
MAL, PR                      Michael Z. Murphy
MAL, Global                  Vacant
2nd VP Membership            John Backman
MAL, Special Projects        Shelia Bentley
Immediate Past President     Phillip Tirpak
Executive Director           Nanette Johnson-Curiskis
IYL Editor                   Margarete Imhof
Listening Post Editor         Gayle Pohl
Web Editor                   Nicole Bodin

Placards for the Listening Day!

The word of the day for ILD