

NEALLT Newsletter, May 2002



NEALLT 2002 Conference, May 3-5 at University of Pittsburgh

Host extraordinaire, Claire Bradin Siskin, welcomed us with open arms and her usual infectious exuberance, setting the tone for a warm and friendly conference. Our thanks to Claire and lab manager David Malicki, graduate student Zsuzsa Horvath, and student assistant Maria Allie, for all their hard work and attention in running a smooth and enjoyable conference. Thanks also to Claire's husband, Marc Siskin, for his invaluable technical assistance and all-around support and good cheer.

The Robert Henderson Language Media Center is housed in the Cathedral of Learning, known as the world's tallest "schoolhouse." Friday evening's reception took place on the 40th floor of the Cathedral of Learning where we enjoyed a gorgeous view of Pittsburgh. An added attraction was the nesting of a peregrine falcon that we were able to quietly catch glimpses of through a closed curtain. Marc was kind enough to share some photos of this magnificent creature.



Peregrine falcon nesting on the 40th floor of the Cathedral of Learning

Before sessions got underway on Saturday, we were welcomed by Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. N. John Cooper. This was followed by a remembrance of Bob Henderson in which Claire showed slides and played a tape of Bob playing his beloved bagpipes (a rousing rendition of the Pittsburgh Steelers' fight song!).

With around 70 participants, this year's NEALLT was extremely productive and well attended. We are grateful to Claire Bradin Siskin, Michael Jones, and Bradley Gano for providing an informative and practical hands-on workshop on accessibility in web page design on Friday afternoon. The program on Saturday and Sunday included twelve presentations and two lab directors' panels, covering a wide range of topics, such as supporting online learning, discussions of various applications of technology in the classroom, and the mission and staffing of the language center. The presentations were of high caliber and generated interesting discussions among the participants. For more detail, please see the session abstracts included in the program at:

<http://irc.swarthmore.edu/NEALL/NEALL.html>

A first for NEALLT, the Multimedia Showcase organized by graduate student Zsuzsa Horvath was a great hit and an opportunity for over twenty language educators to show what they are doing with technology in a low-key, informal manner. A number of graduate students from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University were among those demonstrating projects. Judging from the success of this part of the conference, we will have to consider this forum as a permanent addition to our meetings.

The program for the Multimedia Showcase is available at:

<http://www.polyglot.pitt.edu/events/neallt2002/showcase.html>



Multimedia showcase - a new tradition for NEALLT?

After the sessions on Saturday, we had the opportunity to stretch our legs by taking a short walk over to the Carnegie Mellon campus where lab coordinator Cesar Valencia gave us a tour of the very well-equipped language center under the direction of Christopher Jones. This tour was followed by a return to Pitt for a visit to some of the extraordinary Nationality rooms in the Cathedral of Learning. These unique classrooms are sponsored by local ethnic communities to reflect their countries' history and culture. You can take a virtual tour at:

<http://www.pitt.edu/~natrooms/>

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention the high quality of the food at this year's conference. All of our meals on campus were terrific, whether catered by the University of Pittsburgh or provided by local restaurants. We had an appetizing selection of sandwiches and fried chicken on Saturday and a tantalizing array of Middle Eastern dishes on Sunday. Saturday's dinner at the Casbah was a chance to kick back and enjoy excellent food and conversation. Thanks again to Claire and her crew for hosting a superb conference!

--Mary Beth Barth & Cindy Evans

NEALLT 2002 Business Meeting, May 5, at the University of Pittsburgh

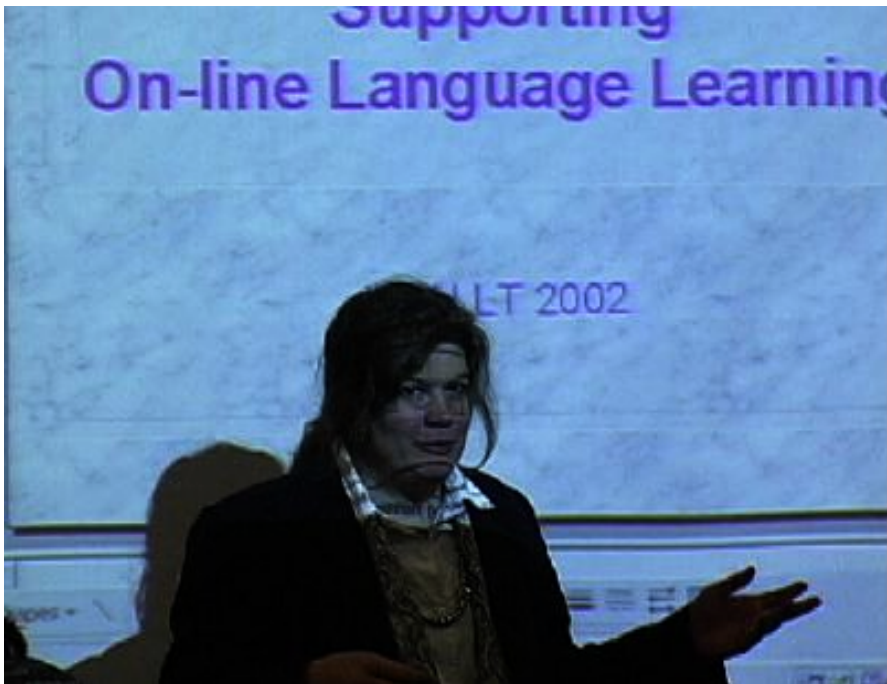
- Approval of NEALLT 2001 minutes
- Marianne Crusius gave budget review – budget is healthy
- Michael Jones reported on elections results:
Cindy Evans, President
Kathy Lewis, Vice President
Marianne Crusius, Treasurer
The vote was unanimous!
- Mark Knowles of Union College has offered to host the next conference. He is checking with his administration. Claire directed us to conference planning materials on the IALLT website: <http://iallt.org/confplan.html>.
- Mary Beth Barth suggested creating a brochure to advertise NEALLT, to be mailed to Lab directors in the NE region and to be inserted in the IALL brochure.
- Content of conference was discussed. It was agreed that a balance between teaching, software, and technology presentation and issues important to lab directors should be achieved – as it was at this conference. All approved that it would be desirable to start the next conference with a techie workshop for lab directors. We discussed that we might want to cater to people who are planning a lab at the next conference and announce the IALLT database of lab planning consultants.
- The question of whether or not we should include/cater to the K-12 crowd was asked again. We decided that it is an important need and they do not have any other input – so we have to and want to do it.
- Claire recommended promoting IALLT more at future NEALLT conferences. Mary Beth pointed out that Nina Garrett usually does this, but she wasn't able to attend NEALLT this year.

- We discussed whether the NEALLT membership fee should continue to be included in the conference registration fee. The consensus was that we should continue to do this.
- A membership database should be established and maintained, two e-mails should be mailed out shortly before the conference, one announcing the conference, the other asking “if you cannot attend but wish to remain on the mailing list – please let us know”. Cindy prefers snail mail for these announcements.
- We decided to revive the custom of everybody introducing him/herself at the beginning of the conference.
- Michael Jones: “Use our funds to subsidize the needy!”
- Mary Beth Barth passed scepter to Cindy Evens as new president.

--Marianne Crusius

Thank you, Mary Beth!

Finally, we want to thank Mary Beth Barth for her tireless efforts to make NEALLT a successful organization that continues to serve the needs of lab directors and language faculty with an interest in technology.



Mary Beth Barth, outgoing NEALLT President