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A Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Three Rivers TESOL Members,

Now that the dog days of summer are ending and most of us are headed back to the classroom it's time to start thinking about Three Rivers TESOL. We had an inspiring spring meeting in which we met a wide variety of members and heard about the many varieties of ESOL instruction happening in and around Pittsburgh. We also elected new board members. I'm happy to report that we have some new faces on the board with new energy and ideas. Join me in welcoming Shannon Mischler, Vice President; Emily Corrado, Secretary; Jennifer Haberman and Martin Senger, Newsletter editors. The executive board would like to thank Maeve Eberhardt and Dorolyn Smith for their years of dedicated service. Peter Kolenich will serve his last year on the board as past president. We would like to thank him for his leadership as president and service to the organization. Thanks also to Claire Bradin Siskin who will continue to serve very ably as Webmaster.

Our annual Fall conference is just around the corner. This year it will take place at [Reizenstein Middle School](#) on October 28. We're making some exciting changes to the conference format so please look for them in this issue of your newsletter. Also, over the past few years, we have reached out to K-12 educators in the area, and we have provided the opportunity for them to earn Act 48 credits. We'll continue to offer this opportunity at this year's conference. My goal as president is to make sure that the Three Rivers TESOL affiliate is serving the needs of all members from administrators to adult education instructors to graduate students and higher education instructors to K-12 teachers. By working together and sharing our knowledge we will create a stronger organization able to serve your needs.

Please get involved in some way. Share the information in this newsletter with others, visit our website, and submit a proposal to our annual conference! You can submit a proposal on-line or via snail mail. Think about becoming a board member yourself next year. If you have ideas for the Fall Conference, or ideas about direction that you would like to see the organization take, send an email to me or another board member. We welcome and value your opinions.

I look forward to seeing you at the Three Rivers TESOL Fall Conference on October 28!

- Allegra Elson

E-Mail: president@3rtesol.org

Review of the 3R TESOL 2006 Annual Spring Meeting

On Saturday, May 13, 2006, Three Rivers TESOL held its annual spring meeting. For those of you who are new to the organization, you may not realize just how important this meeting is for us as a TESOL affiliate.

Through our spring meeting, we are able to focus on our affiliate and draw attention to the issues we are facing from year to year. One of the most important aspects of the spring meeting is the election of new officers. Most Three Rivers TESOL board positions involve

a 2-year commitment. We would like to thank our newest board members for volunteering their time and expertise. We would also like to encourage all of you to contact a board member for more information if you think you might be interested in running for office next year. Elected at the spring meeting were Shannon Mischler, Vice-president; Emily Corrado, Secretary; Jennifer Haberman and Martin Senger, Newsletter Editor and Newsletter Co-Editor, respectively.

Another wonderful aspect of the spring meeting is that we are able to focus on local issues related to ESL. This year, in lieu of a single speaker at our meeting, we had a panel presentation on refugees and immigrants and what services they are receiving with regard to ESL instruction. We were happy to welcome speakers from various organizations. We would like to thank Tim McKay from Pittsburgh Public Schools' ESL program, <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/AcademicOffice/InstructionalSupport/ESL/>; Kerry Skemp from the Welcome Center for Immigrants and Internationals, <http://www.wcii.org/>; Judy Berkowitz from Baldwin/Whitehall School District, <http://www.bwschools.net/liberty/index.htm>; Danis Kubiak, Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3, www.aiu3.net; Joshua Kivuva and Shannon Mischler from Families for Learning Center, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, www.gplc.org.

It was quite interesting to learn from those involved about the wide range of issues the ESL community is facing right here in the Three Rivers region. Those of you who attended had wonderful time learning about Three Rivers TESOL and our TESOL community. We look forward to seeing everyone again at our fall conference!

- Peter Kolenich



Come one, come all to the Three Rivers TESOL Annual Fall Conference!

**Saturday, October 28, 2007
at Reizenstein Middle School**

Network with fellow ESL teachers,
researchers, and students!



For more
information, or
to register, visit
www.3rtesol.org

Changes to Fall Conference

In response to the evolving needs of our members, there will be a few changes to the Three Rivers TESOL (3RT) Fall conference this year.

First of all, our number one issue at last year's conference was that there were too many concurrent sessions. Closely linked to that issue were many comments about there being too little time between sessions.

In hopes of developing a more member-friendly conference, we have decided to limit the number of concurrent sessions, thereby allowing for more time between sessions. We hope that the new conference format will be a positive change for 3RT. However, it is an ongoing process of evaluation and adaptation. We invite all of you who attend this year's conference to submit your surveys at the end of the conference so that we can continue to adjust to the changing needs of our members.

- Peter Kolenich

The 41st Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit (TESOL 2007)

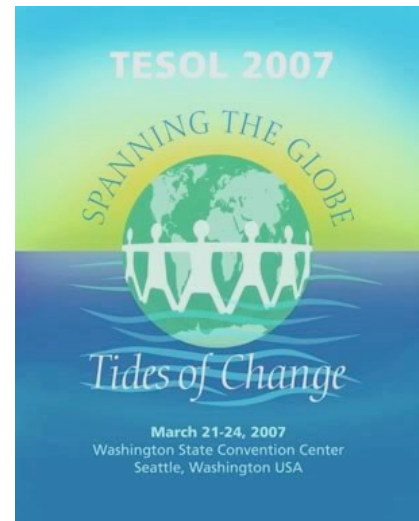
Save the date... Tell a co-worker..Let your principal or administrator know that TESOL is coming to Seattle, Washington for its 41st Annual Convention and Exhibit at the Seattle Convention Center, March 21-24, 2007.

Special Rate: Let them know that TESOL is offering a special rate to all Seattle ESL/EFL teachers who will be attending the convention: **PAY FOR FOUR and the FIFTH COMES FREE!** If four teachers from one school or school district pre-register for the TESOL convention, the fifth teacher from the same school or school district attends for free. This offer is available only for those teachers who pre-register for the convention. Attendees who register on-site in Seattle will not receive this special rate.

Additional information and registration forms will be mailed in November 2006. Pre- registration for TESOL's 2007 convention opens December 1, 2006.

- **Network:** TESOL's annual convention offers you the chance to network with more than 6,500 of your peers from 100 countries.
- **Topics:** Based on your feedback and suggestions, the convention program chair has compiled a list of Hot Topics and presentations resulting in more than 700 sessions.
- **Plenary speakers:** Ron Carter, Diane Larsen-Freeman, Betty Azar, and Jun Liu.

This program will provide a wide range of opportunities for you to learn and share valuable information that will enhance your professional development and improve your students' classroom experience.



So...save the date...talk it over...plan to be there. Tell your principal or administrator that you want to attend TESOL's Annual Convention and Exhibit in Seattle, Washington, March 21-24, 2007.

TESOL
700 Alexandria Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-0774
Website: <http://www.tesol.org>

Free International TESOL Memberships!

International TESOL has provided 3R TESOL with five free memberships because we paid our affiliate annual dues on time. If you are **not** yet a member of 'big' TESOL, and you **are** a member of 3R TESOL, you can submit for a chance to win a free membership.

Either fill out the form and send to:

Emily Corrado
GPLC
411 Seventh Avenue, Ste 525
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

or email the necessary information to:
secretary@3rtesol.org

We will chose the five winners at our fall conference on October 28.

International TESOL Membership Raffle Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(please write VERY CLEARLY)

Are you a current member of 3RT? ___ yes ___ no

*Eligibility: If you are not a member of 3R TESOL, you are not eligible to participate in this raffle. If you are currently a member of 'big' TESOL, you are not eligible to participate in this raffle.

Enter to win!

New Conference Session Format

All student members of Three Rivers TESOL are invited and encouraged to submit proposals to the fall conference. For many of you, this may be the first time that you get to present at a conference, and your local TESOL affiliate is a great way to get your feet wet!

An exciting change at the conference this year will be the creation of a Student Symposium. At the conference, we will have a room dedicated for student member use. Many of our regional universities and colleges are institutional members of 3RT. Each institutional member will have a block of time during which students from that institution may present. It will be up to the students from that institution to decide who will speak, when and for how long.

Student members who do not attend one of our institutional member institutions will also be invited to present. They will, as a group, have a block of time dedicated for their use.

Another option for presenting at the conference is the Poster Session. A Poster Session advertises your research. It combines text and graphics to make a visually-pleasing presentation. Typically, a professional poster involves showing your work to numerous researchers at a conference or seminar. This can take place in one large room, or in several smaller rooms. Then, as viewers walk by, your poster should quickly and efficiently communicate your research. Unlike the fast pace of a slide show or verbal presentation, a Poster Session allows viewers to study and restudy your information and discuss it with you one-on-one. Please consider this option also as you think about your presentations for fall.

- Peter Kolenich

Professional Development Opportunity:

Southwest Pennsylvania ESL Network

How often have you been frustrated because you just couldn't "reach" that particular student? A daily occurrence, you say. They joys of being an ESL teacher! Well, if it is any comfort, you are not alone.

I recently had the honor of joining the Southwest [Pennsylvania] ESL Network for a couple of their bi-monthly meetings. I was invited because I am an ESL teacher for the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) and also one of the facilitators of the Northwest [Pennsylvania] ESL Network, also in Erie, and we had discussed increasing the ties between our two groups, since we share many of the same ethnic populations, and almost all the same ESL problems.

The ESL Networks (there are several regional branches around the state) are professional organizations for ESL teachers sponsored by the PA Development Center (PDC), part of the PA Department of Educations (PDE). Currently, most members are adult-ed teachers, but some branches are welcoming any ESL practitioner, regardless or teaching level or employment status.

I have worked with Doug Masiroff, of the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, and also a facilitator of the SW Network, on several projects previously, so we were not strangers. We both appreciate how networking can improve and increase our ESL teaching experience. It was also at a SW Network meeting that I first met our illustrious Three Rivers TESOL leader, Allegra, and thus became affiliated with our esteemed local TESOL group.

Apart from having invited speakers attend the Network meetings, another great aspect is the informal sharing of problems and solutions between peers. My wife is also a teacher, but in a preschool. Actually, it is quite funny how we often have the same problems teaching grammar and pronunciation, but only another ESL teacher can really understand what we go through on a daily basis. Sometimes the only comfort they can offer is one of understanding, but that is usually enough. But the actual amount of experience and knowledge present at the Networks is extraordinary.

So the next time you feel like pounding your head against the blackboard, remember that others have done that before you, and we might just be able to help.

- Martin Senger

Bits of the Board

In order to make the Board more accessible to members, in this and coming issues of the newsletter we will profile the 3RT Board members. Please feel free to email them with your comments and suggestions.

Allegra Elson, President

Allegra Elson has her Masters degree in Italian Language and Literature from the University of Pittsburgh and a TESOL Certificate from Teachers College, Columbia University. She has taught at the University of Pittsburgh, Kent State University, and Duquesne University. As a volunteer member of the national service group, Americorps, she served with Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council in its South Pittsburgh office as an ESL and Adult Basic Education instructor. She worked extensively with refugees in the South Hills area. Now, as a full-time ESL instructor with Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, she works with a variety of foreign-born students in the East End area. She served on the executive board of Three Rivers TESOL as vice-president in 2005-2006 and is currently president.

Email: president@3rtesol.org

Martin Senger, Newsletter Co-editor

Martin Senger is from Erie. He graduated from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with a degree in Russian Language. He then moved to the former Yugoslavia, where he taught English as a foreign language (EFL) to refugees for three years. He returned to the USA, enrolling in Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Master's TESOL program. However, he was invited to Kosovo to prepare a report on all aspects of English language learning in Kosovo (in the former Yugoslavia) by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). While looking for more permanent humanitarian aid work in Kosovo, he met his wife (in Pittsburgh). So, now he is a full-time ESL teacher for the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) in Erie. He has two delightful children and helps to manage his wife's home child care.

Email: co-editor@3rtesol.org

Jennifer Haberman, Newsletter Editor

Jennifer Haberman has degrees in both Spanish and International Studies from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has taught Spanish for Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). These teaching experiences and her background in Spanish led Jennifer into the ESL field; she has been teaching ESL full-time at Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh since January 2004. She also teaches part-time for Global LT and privately. She holds a TESOL Certificate and is currently studying for her Masters of Education specializing in TESOL.

Email: editor@3rtesol.org

Claire Bradin Siskin, Webmaster

Claire Bradin Siskin taught ESL for many years and now directs the Robert Henderson Language Media Center at the University of Pittsburgh. She has conducted faculty workshops in Portugal, Egypt, Dubai, and most recently in Romania, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, and Kosovo. In TESOL she is current chair of the Professional Development Standing Committee.

Email: webmaster@3rtesol.org

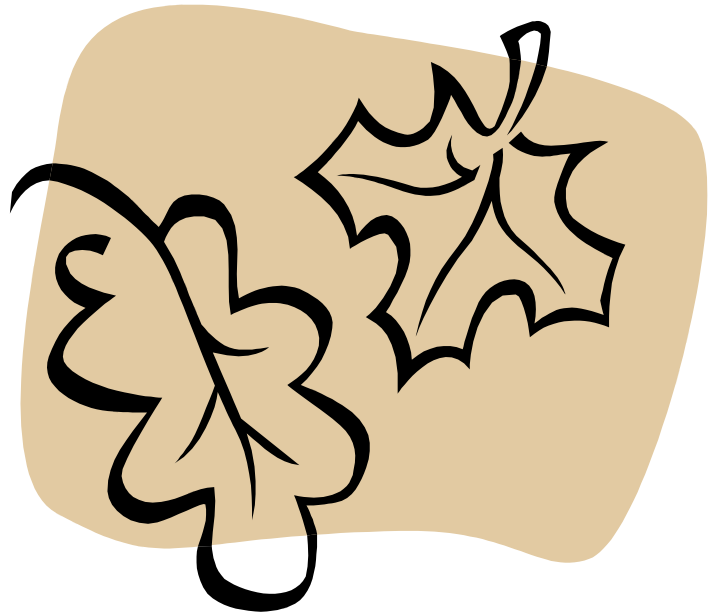
Mark your calendars!

What: 3RT Fall Conference

When: Saturday, October 28

Where: Reizenstein Middle School

For more information,
or to register, visit
www.3rtesol.org



Three Rivers
TESOL

Questions?
Comments?

Contact information
for all officers can be
found on our website!

Visit us at:

www.3rtesol.org

