



Published on *IALLT* (<http://www.iallt.org>)

[Home](#) > [Blogs](#) > [harold\\_hendricks's blog](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

## State of IALLT, 2011



harold\_hendricks Thu, 2011-07-21 14:57

### **This address was given by Mike Ledgerwood at the conclusion of his term as President during the IALLT 2011 banquet at UC Irvine, Friday, June 24th.**

Before we get to 2011, let me share some history with all of you. I hope my reasons for doing so will be clear by the end of my address. And I apologize for reading a written text, which I never do when teaching. But I also hope to share my thoughts with those not present and have written them out to share. This address will be very hard for me and I hope not for the rest of you.

As an aside, both my best friend and my father-in-law retired early at the age I turned at my last birthday. Me, don't think so. 70? And that's many years away. And isn't the new late 50's the old late 30's? Hope so and feel like that. Anyway...

In 1965 a group of individuals involved in helping support the newly ubiquitous "language laboratory" met somewhere (perhaps in Chicago?) to create the North American Association of Language Laboratory Directors. NAALD was successful and did important work, some published in its journal, to inform American foreign language pedagogy using technology. Since 1965 NAALD has morphed, just as the language laboratory has. By the mid 1980s the language laboratory was labeled a dinosaur by many and many language laboratories became extinct when they did not change and adapt. However, in an example of a kind of "Lamarckian" evolution, the strongest language laboratories became Language Centers of one type or another. NAALD died its own death in the 80s as well, only to be reborn (some say at a meeting with our sister group in Japan) as IALL, whose acronym was originally the International Association of Learning Laboratories (and thanks to Thomas Hammond for the reminder of that).

In 1989 a very much younger French professor attended the very first IALL meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Having grown up in ALM days (the pedagogy whose acronym is given both as the "American Language Method" and the "Audio-Lingual Method", he grew to hate the language laboratory in his high school. He felt "cloistered" and cut off in the booths with the huge headphones resonant of the sound of the sea (audio example here). In his first job as the entire foreign language department (Spanish and French 101 and 102 each eight times in two years) at the University of South Carolina at Sumter (said in a South Carolina accent) and de-facto language lab director, he bought a big boom box to replace the entire console-based language laboratory. Thus he was an extremely unlikely candidate to become the language laboratory director at Rhodes College in 1988. However, after a great deal of coercion he took on this task since he was an untenured assistant professor. In 1989 money became available for a new language laboratory and he had no clue about what to build. But in a Deus ex-machina moment his department chair received a mailing about a meeting in Massachusetts of a group that might help with this planning and suggested that the young

professor should attend the meeting. He gladly agreed.

And he fell in love. No, not with a person, but with an organization, its members, and its knowledge... He found the female leaders of IALL to be so cool, not having had much experience with women in leadership positions at that point in his life, especially Ruth Trometer, Trisha Dvorak, LeeAnn Stone, and Sue Otto. The men were just as cool. And unlike MLA or the Semiotics Society of America, everyone at IALL was relaxed, informal, pragmatic and helpful. After seeing "A la rencontre de Philippe" developed at MIT and the PICS computer-controlled videodiscs from the University of Iowa...wow! He went back to Rhodes and built an entire language center, not lab, for this technology.

Well, that language center has finally been replaced in the last year thanks to the skill and expertise of Felix Kronenberg, one of our members, and editor of our new Language Center Design volume and I understand he might share a bit of Rhodes history tonight. Oh well. No? Sigh of relief!

Back to the story, this young professor became a professor and Director of the Language Learning and Research Center at the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1994. He was hired to "build it and have them come" at Stony Brook. He did, once again, thanks to IALL and its incredible people. He attended every single IALL meeting throughout those years and with Ed Dente, is one of two people who've been to every IALL and now IALLT. And, yes, he was there for the interminable meetings when this name change occurred.

He's seen amazing changes. He'll never forget the email note Otmar Foelsche sent him describing how Otmar had seen a demo of this new thing called the "World Wide Web" and how "it will change absolutely everything".

This young French professor is now full professor and chair of his department, in part thanks to IALLT. He's been part of the IALLT family all of those 22 years. He's seen so much joy and so much sadness at IALLT. He's seen member friends marry, form partnerships, have children, and die. He's seen a member publically announce he's a "gay man" at a conference in the early 90's. He'll never forget three members whom we memorialize in different ways at IALLT, Bob Henderson (whose murderer was finally arrested recently), Ursula Williams, whose remission from cancer was tragically short-lived, and Marie Sheppard who died young from cancer as well. And do I have stories about them and what fantastic people they were (story about Ursula and song?). And I'll have to stop about that or I won't be able to see my text. Marie's memorial service at the IALL conference after her death where IALL members shared their memories of her has to have been when I've cried the most in public.

And, yes, real men do cry, and real men eat and even make quiche. You can see my video on [Youtube](#) <sup>[1]</sup> for the recipe: . And even a man from Appalachian Tennessee whose family has no foreign language speakers since his family has been in the U.S., since it was the U.S, can learn a foreign language in the U.S. "No excuses U.S."

Anyway, where are we now? Whither IALLT? The last two years have seen both enormous challenges and real progress. Thanks to the leadership of Ryan Brazell, Barbara Sawhill, and Ute Lahaie our web site has been reborn! While something this vast is still a "work in progress", it is nevertheless an enormous leap forward and was profiled this year in ACTFL's The Language Educator. Thanks to the leadership of Lance Askildson the IALLT Journal has also been reborn. The "I" in IALLT has taken on new meaning. We renewed our relationship with the Language Education Technology Association of Japan last August when three of the IALLT Board and several of our members attended and presented at LET's 50th anniversary meeting in Yokohama, Japan. Although no one videoed my "congratulatory" remarks to LET at the banquet at the Intercontinental Hotel, I was amused that the Japanese I had learned in the week before the conference was understood and even more amused when a young man came up to me after my remarks to say I had spoken for three minutes exactly (showing me his watch)! (I had a three minute time slot.) And I'm in total love with real Japanese food.

I was also grateful to be invited as a keynote speaker at a shared conference of AsiaCALL and IndiaCALL in Anand, Gujarat, India partially because of being IALLT President. I also love India. I was treated as a rock star in India. For a man "of a certain age", as the French say, to have autographs and photos requested from Indian young people and have thirty of them as Facebook friends?

And one of the unexpected fruits of attending that conference is our new affiliate relationship with AsiaCALL and IndiaCALL becoming a regional group of IALLT. We've also renewed ties with EuroCALL and Lance Askildson is our new affiliate representative to that group. We're exploring ties to groups in Latin America. We already have ties in Australia. That just leaves Africa for the "I" in IALLT.

As positive progress, I should also include our strengthened relationship with ACTFL thanks to Stacey Powell, Marlene Johnshoy, Judi Franz, and yours truly, our renewed ties with CALICO thanks to Cindy Evans and Stacey Powell and the excitement of a shared conference with CALICO at Notre Dame next year, thanks to Lance Askildson. Our listserv (shared with Harvard and Dartmouth) is very well known and huge thanks to both Thomas Hammond and Anthony Helm. Thanks to yours truly the Association of Departments of Foreign Language knows IALLT well (and yes, I did write to their listserv with a pitch to send their language center directors to this IALLT conference that was eerily reminiscent of 1989).

IALLT is better known than ever throughout the world. Look at the international composition of our attendees (and you saw a few minutes ago all of the International attendees be recognized) Our Past President (while President) was invited to China for a conference on technology and language by UNESCO. Thanks to the very hard work and stubbornness of our retiring treasurer, Ron Balko, whose first word as a baby must have been, "NO", IALLT has money in the bank. This has already been a wonderful conference in a beautiful place. Presentations have been great. There are so many new people and younger people here. I can tell everyone here is having a great time. I've had people tell me this is the best conference they have ever attended! Judi Franz is a goddess in so many ways (and you can see her cheerleader pics from USC days if you need further evidence...).

Life is beautiful for IALLT, or is it?

But when I look around the room why do I feel like I'm back in the 80s? Why (did you) and will you hear so many names repeated in our accolades? Why are there not over 500 people in this room as there was at a shared (FLEAT) conference with LET at the University of Victoria in British Columbia in the 90's? Why am I not giving a President's Award? Why is IALLT falling behind its regional groups in professional development and web conferencing? Why could so many of the presentations at this conference be given at so many other conferences? Where is our identity, our soul?

As I step down as President and hand over the gavel to President Ute Lahaie, I am handing over many questions and concerns to her and our President-Elect Harold Hendricks. It is, I think, again, 1985. In what might be IALLT's greatest glory times, we also face some of our greatest challenges. We need to continue to do all of what we currently do so very, very, well. However we need to become "important" and "crucial" again and attract new members who become as passionate about our organization as the vast majority of us here are. Our Journal has to become a must read for any of us in our professions. Our publications have to be big sellers (for academia) and updated. Our web site has to have massive "hits". And our conference has to again become a "must" instead of a "wish I were there and miss everybody so much!"

So many of us here have laid the groundwork for IALLT's next great leap forward. It is up to the new leadership of IALLT to make that leap. However, know that I will be leaping with you for the rest of my life. 2013 already looks to be a great meeting in South Florida as IALLT moves from coast to coast. 2015 will be IALLT's 50th anniversary. May we invite some of our Japanese friends to attend and may this meeting be in early August in a place close to Japan? If we have a FLEAT, can we issue a special invitation and reserve slots for our affiliates in Asia, India, and Europe, as well as Japan? And may these next meetings set IALLT up for the next 50 years!

With much love, much affection, too much emotion, and huge hugs, in a few minutes your new Past President but also IALLT attendee for 22 years and, God willing, for many, many more, your Mike.

Sayonara.

Copyright © IALLT 2010

Design and Development  
[prkos.hr](http://prkos.hr)



---

**Source URL:** [http://www.iallt.org/news/state\\_of\\_iallt\\_2011](http://www.iallt.org/news/state_of_iallt_2011)

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TxXPpagwaE>

