

CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS 1968 – 1993

A REPRODUCTION OF THE ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

May 5, 1993

Dear Colleagues,

At a meeting of the Board of Directors earlier this year, the idea of commemorating our twenty-fifth anniversary with a booklet of articles about our organization was very favorably received. After discussing the plan with a few colleagues, I contacted a number of members who have contributed or continue to contribute to the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers to help provide a picture of the organization, its activities, services, and professional direction. These articles, therefore, recount events as seen through the eyes of different people over the course of twenty-five years who include the perceptions, points of view, verbal snapshots, and reactions to directions to ponder for the future.

The Connecticut Council of Language Teachers: From 1968 to 1993 is dedicated to all the professionals who helped create the organization, those who have nurtured the organization through its developing years, and those who currently lead the organization with vision tempered with the sound judgment and wisdom of our past, as we move forward into the twenty-first century.

I would like to extend thanks to all the contributors to this document. Their willingness to contribute to this booklet is a testimony to the fine individuals they are, their quality work and their sense of volunteerism which is a cornerstone of our organization's history. A special expression of thanks also goes to Marie Poulin and Christine Steward for their time and effort with the design, layout and technical assistance without which this project would not have been possible.

Bert J. Neumaier
Vice-President/President Elect
Connecticut Council of Language Teachers

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In the Beginning

by Kenneth A Lester,
 State Foreign Language Consultant Emeritus

This article is about the conception, birth and early life of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (Connecticut COLT). The author was chiefly responsible in conceiving the organization and continued as a major participant in its birth and first twenty-three years of life.

Before 1967, the foreign language teachers of Connecticut had no voice in their destiny as a profession in the state. There were several strong individual language organizations such as the American Association of Teachers of French...German...Slavic and Eastern European languages...Spanish and Portuguese and the Connection Section of the Classical Association of New England. None of these, of course, had the authority to speak for all foreign language teachers.

There was one group which did try to represent the views of language teachers in general, and that was the State Foreign Language Advisory Committee. This committee was appointed by the State Commission of Education (then known as the Secretary to the State Board of Education) and was advisory to the State Department of Education. It dates back to 1953 when it was set up to provide advice to Commissioner Finis Engleman on how to handle the question of commencing Foreign language in the elementary school. For the next seven years it advised the state on matters of content related to foreign languages. Then, in 1960, in the wake of the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik, a position of Foreign Language Consultant was created in the State Department of Education.

The Foreign Language Advisory Committee continued in existence for many years, giving the State Consultant a valuable means for tapping the expertise of foreign language teachers at all levels of education and from several different languages. However, these voices for foreign language teachers, both the State Consultant and the Foreign Language Advisory Committee, were not independent. They were subject to screening and censoring through the policies of the State Department of Education. This lack of an independent voice for all foreign language teachers was of concern to me, although my concern was not shared by many of the other leaders in foreign language instruction in the state. They active, popular AAT's were seen as sufficient support for teachers of the languages they represent.

The ever changing education environment became more difficult for foreign language education as we moved into the late 60's. The need for a strong, independent advocate for languages was felt by more and more teachers and language supervisors. This atmosphere, combined with the sudden formation of a national organization, created a milieu where conceiving a state foreign language teachers' organization was possible.

The national organization founded in 1967 was the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). In my position as Foreign Language Consultant, I received an invitation for Connecticut's statewide foreign language teachers organization affiliate with ACTFL as a member of the governing board. Since we had no such organization, we would be left out of a movement which I believed would be very significant for the language teaching profession.

The only group in Connecticut representing all languages at all levels was the State Foreign Language Advisory Committee. The Chairman in 1967 was Morton Briggs of Wesleyan University. I met with Professor Briggs, Professor Arthur Selvi of Central Connecticut State College and several foreign language coordinators, among whom were Robert Serafino of New Haven and Jane Bourque of Stratford. (My apologies for names I have left out. Perhaps someone else can fill us in on what I miss.) We developed plans for an organization which would be called the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers and which would be founded in complete cooperation with the existing language teacher associates in the state.

We proposed to the State Foreign Language Advisory Committee that it be designated as the executive board for the new organization until it could become operational. We then applied to ACTFL for recognition as Connecticut's affiliate to the national organization. I agreed to serve as interim executive secretary, using my good offices to communicate with teachers in the state as well as with ACTFL. The Advisory Committee also appointed me to serve (in its capacity as the Connecticut COLT Executive Board) as its representative to the ACTFL Board of Directors meeting in December 1967.

Efforts to organize a state language teachers' group was first announced to Connecticut teachers in the April 1967 issue of the Foreign Language News Exchange (at that time a publication of the State Department of Education, office of the Foreign Language Consultant). The assistance of the individual language associates was enlisted during the 1967-1968 academic year, requesting that they contribute fifty cents per member so all could become charter members of Connecticut COLT. As of June 1968,

there were 480 members of Connecticut COLT: 240 through AATF, 160 through AATSP, 50 through Connecticut CANE, 15 through AATG and 12 who joined independently.

The first available written record of the organization is a set of minutes of the Executive Board of Connecticut COLT dated June 5, 1968. A mail ballot with nominations for officers as proposed by the State Foreign Language Advisory Committee, acting as the interim Executive Board, had been sent to the 480 members early in the spring. As a result, the following people assumed their offices on May 1, 1968: President, Kenneth A. Lester, State Department of Education; Vice President, Robert P. Serafino, New Haven Public Schools; Secretary, Janice S. Calkin, Greenwich Public Schools, and Treasurer, Doris Barry, Charter Oak School, West Hartford. Other members of the Executive Board were: Jacqueline de L. Skubly, President, Conn. AATF; Luz Geldman, President, Conn. AATSP; Elizabeth Knight, President, Conn. AATG; Sally Casper of the Connecticut Section of CANE; Morton Briggs, Wesleyan University; Symond Yavener, Central Connecticut State College; George Cushman, Choate School; and Sister Artheur du St. Esprit, Cathedral High School, Bridgeport.

The June 5th meeting was concerned with many details of the new-born organization. Dominic Cote of Branford had been charged with developing a constitution and bylaws, assisted by four members of the Executive Board. A document was needed before the fall teachers convention, for the first time to be run by Connecticut COLT instead of the State Foreign Language Advisory Committee. COLT was to have its first membership business meeting at the convention and we were to ask for approval of the documents, sealing the establishment of the Council. It was noted that the treasury amassed for the 50 cents dues would be almost depleted by the cost of mailing the documents to all members by first class mail. The Executive Board also directed that the statement of purpose be included in a late June mailing to members. The three paragraph statement is as follows:

The purpose of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers is to give an articulate voice to the body of foreign language teachers in Connecticut.

There are matters of public policy and pedagogical and curricular procedures which all foreign language teachers may wish to address. There are services to the profession which, other resources lacking, this Council may best be able to offer in the State of Connecticut.

The goal of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, then, is to accomplish these purposes and to fulfill these needs.

Over the next several years, dedicated officers and members of Connecticut COLT served the profession by attempting to conform to these challenging purposes. As services were curtailed by the State of Connecticut, the Council took over the publication of the Foreign Language News Exchange, initially mailing it to all public school foreign language teachers as the State Department of Education had been doing. When the School-College Committee (originally founded by my office to assist in articulation between schools and colleges in foreign language instruction) began to get into the realm of statewide testing, the Committee was assumed by COLT as one of its functions. (Back then, the State Department of Education was reluctant to even mention the prospect of sponsoring any kind of state-endorsed

testing.) When my task as foreign language consultant was supplemented by bilingual education, English for Speakers of Other Language and curriculum development unit coordinator, I could no longer devote the time needed to keep the foreign language coordinators (COFLIC) going. Again, when I asked COLT to take on sponsorship of the group, the Board of Directors readily agreed.

The complete story of Connecticut COLT's growth in service to the profession in those early days is too long for this piece. Let me just end this narrative by stating unequivocally that the young organization, the symbol of which is the mythical Pegasus, spread its wings, took flight and fulfilled its destiny with high style and vigor.

Pegasus

*Joyce C. Narden
Amity Senior High School*

Once there was a beautiful young maiden who was seduced by the god Poseidon. In their all-consuming passion, this couple -- god and mortal -- had the effrontery to make love in a shrine of the virgin goddess Athena. Needless to say, chaste Athena did not feel honored by their act: she was, in fact, outraged, and, as enraged goddesses are wont, sought revenge for this sacrilege. Wreaking vengeance on a fellow deity such as Poseidon could prove difficult, so Athena looked to the hapless young lady who was, incidentally, both foolish and vain.

Fascinated with her own beauty, the young woman liked nothing better than to spend hours before her brightly polished bronze mirror, applying the latest in make-up and tressing her locks in the most fashionable styles. Athena in her wisdom --she was, after all, the goddess of wisdom-- saw an excellent chance for a most apropos revenge. She transformed this lovely young woman into the hideous young monster her name, Medusa, still conjures: her gleaming locks became teeming serpents; her luminous eyes turned glowing red; the pearl-white of her teeth grew into ivory tusks; her creamy satin skin changed into green flaky scales; and her once-delicate tongue now jutted indelicately out of her hissing mouth. All-in-all, a most arresting sight, enough to change a person to stone, precisely the effect Medusa had henceforth upon anyone who ventured to look at her face. In despair, Medusa fled to the land of the Gorgons, creatures like herself and now her sisters. There she remained, wretched, odious, petrifying -- and a challenge to any enterprising young hero.

Such a young man was Perseus, son of Zeus and the mortal Danae. In an effort to prove his manhood, he boasted to his tyrannical king that he would seek out the Gorgon Medusa and bring back her ugly head. The gods smiled upon the young hero and his naive temerity. With the help of Hermes and the unrelenting Athena, Perseus found Medusa and lopped off her head, simultaneously avoiding a stony fate.

The deed done, Perseus leaped back astounded, for from the black blood and grisly gore of the slain monster, there sprung forth a most remarkable creature, a graceful embodiment of freedom and song, the winged horse Pegasus. But how could this be? How could such ugliness give birth to such beauty?

You see, nothing of the gods is ever wasted. A child of Poseidon, god of horses, and the once-beautiful, once-desired Medusa, had lain unborn within its monstrous mother, awaiting yearning for the release that Perseus' sword allowed. Once freed, the horse-child sprouted wings and took to the sky.

Paradoxically, Medusa's final bequest was a winged steed able to traverse earth and sky -- a wondrous vision of freedom and poetic inspiration through the ages.

Such then is the birth of the Pegasus that CT COLT has adopted for our logo. Inspired by the freedom and flight of the winged horse, we seek to break loose from the confines of monolingualism and its parochial view, and on the wings of language to attain an ecumenical vision of the world. We hope to inspire others to do the same, for why else would we teach?

COLT at 25

Morton W. Briggs
Wesleyan University, Emeritus

COLT at 25! And how much has been accomplished since those early days when we were seeking for a voice, for one united voice which could make itself heard. Ken Lester's article in the latest News Exchange says it all; it brought back a flood of memories. Amid the exhortations of those who saw the need for a broadly-based organization there were some who blanched at the prospect of change and the addition of another series of meetings, and some who felt that the individual language groups would lose their integrity, swallowed by the impersonal umbrella organization. In retrospect, what we did was timely, really long overdue, foresighted, and enduring.

I am proud to have been involved in the creation of COLT and have followed its growth and development over the years. Since my last turn as a director I have continued as a member of the School-College Committee, which I firmly believe to be a central committee in the COLT enterprise, in theory if not always in practice. This committee, more than any other segment of the organization, emphasizes the coordination between the schools and the colleges and speaks to both areas of our clientele. Such coordination and cooperation is to my mind a valuable property which we should treat with tenderness and encourage with all consideration. I am dismayed to see fewer and fewer college people among the COLT officers, fewer and fewer college language departments with active members of COLT. And I urge COLT members, together with officers to make a concerted effort to encourage college language teachers to take a more active role, both as members and workers, in what should be their organization as well as that of elementary and secondary schools.

In the early days of the Foreign Language Advisory Committee, when enthusiasm was high for beginning the teaching of languages at the elementary level, we produced a pamphlet which spoke to that situation. Recognizing that many school systems could not afford foreign language classes in every grade, we urged as a compromise the development of a strong 6-year sequence could be accepted into more advanced college courses, and thus capitalize on their investment of time and effort. Such a teaching pattern is equally valid today and is in effect in some school systems. But we Americans remain all too indifferent to our increasingly desperate need to master foreign languages. Until we accept the smallness of the world and the immediacy of global communication, until we admit our increasingly critical handicap, both from the point of view of business and the point of view of culture, in not being able to communicate with other peoples in their own language, until that time we foreign language teachers must continue to fight. And our struggle will have that much more influence, that much more "clout" if we can stand before school boards and city councils and legislatures as a united group speaking for all levels from elementary grades through college and graduate school.

May the next 25 years for COLT be a time to bring to fruition what we have so successfully undertaken in the first quarter-century. And may we enter the 21st century with resolve, perseverance, and enthusiasm, with confidence in our cause and love for what we are doing!

Reflections, Reveries and Recollections of the Early Years (1968 - 1980)

Fondly recalled for your reading pleasure by
Ken Lester and Toby Tamarkin , Holyoke Community College

EARLY BOARD MEETINGS: The COLT Board began informally. Meetings were usually held in members' homes. Often a brief refreshment/social half-hour preceded the business meeting. UNTIL ONE FINE DAY...we gathered on a Friday afternoon at the home of the TESOL President, Lois Maglietto, on Farmington Avenue in West Hartford. Refreshments included a large punch bowl and we all began filling and refilling small punch glasses with a fruity, delicious drink. No minutes are available of that meeting, nor does anyone recall with precision exactly what happened. Much later we discovered that the punch recipe called for: a full bottle of scotch; two different bottles of liquor with a fruit base; wine; vodka; and a dash of soda water. Shortly after this incident, we decided to meet at schools and serve only coffee and cookies.

EARLY FINANCES: After operating informally for about a year, COLT began in June, 1968 with a treasury of \$150.00 received from the AAT's who enrolled their members at a fee of 50 cents each. Individual memberships were \$2.00 –we had ONE! We wanted to send a mailing of the new constitution to all members, but the postage would deplete our treasury. Luckily, Ken Lester was able to send the mailing at State expense.

The reason we tied the COLT Fall Conference to the CEA Convention Day (the end of October) was to receive the CEA subsidy which would help COLT defray its costs.

EARLY IDEAS THAT WERE AHEAD OF OUR TIME:

- “Tricks of the Trade” (now a new feather at the Northeast Conference), appeared first on COLT's Conference program in 1972 as a session by Toby Tamarkin
- An article in the 1972 News Exchange by Don Thornhill of Westport was about “outcome-Oriented Teaching”
- Teaching modern foreign languages for proficiency so it may be used as an employment tool, as the topic of a 1974 PreConference Workshop for ACTFL, in Denver, Colorado by Lester and Tamarkin.
- During the gloom and doom of the 1974 Conference (foreign language requirements were being dropped and enrollments were on the decline), Ken Lester spoke of “the promise and opportunity which can be ours if we only reach out and grasp it.” According to the report in the Foreign Language News Exchange, his was the “only voice of optimism amidst those singing a sad song about language teaching.
- In 1979, Bob Packard of Old Saybrook was in charge of Project Learn's program on Global Perspectives.
- “Opening New Windows,” the first and only two-day COLT Fall Conference, held at the Hartford Hilton on October 25, and 26 1974. However we did manage to have as keynote speaker, the former Ambassador to Spain and Former Governor of Connecticut, John David Lodge, who spoke

on the value of languages in diplomacy. This was the only time we were able to get a “governor” to speak at our conference.

- “Humor that didn’t make it:” Ken Lester, speaking as Master of ceremonies at a COLT Conference, referred to Toby Tamarkin as his “wife away from home” because she kept reminding him of the things that he needed to do. The resulting gossip and rumors indicated that the remark was not taken in the spirit intended.
- The COLT Award for an Outstanding Foreign Language Program. The form was incredibly complex, the criteria were not sufficiently objective and few chose to apply because they didn’t want to subject themselves to such scrutiny.
- Spring Meetings (no matter when or where they are held). One memorable such event was entitled “ Sun, Sangria, Song and Smiles” and was held on May 15, 1971 at Beachland Park, with an outdoor barbecue, Marco Arenas in charge of “sangria”, Ukrainian dancers, a sing-along in French, Italian, and Spanish and even a special performance by a dancer who balanced three full glasses of wine (one in each hand and a third on her head) while performing intricate steps and rhythms. Despite this outstanding program, there were only about 30 participants.

EARLY UNSUNG HEROES

- Robert G. Mead, Jr., who not only attends COLT functions faithfully, but consistently is the first to register.
- Bob Serafino. Who, every year before he served finding judges for the poetry contest, represented COLT on the Connecticut Education Forum, a little known and now defunct organization.
- Doris Barry-Owens, who was our first treasurer and helped COLT grow from the initial \$150 investment by the AAT’s to more than \$5,000 in 1978. And look at that treasury today!
- Nellie Agostino, who was willing to take on any assignment behind the scenes.
- We are certain there are many additional deserving unsung heroes, whose contributions have unfortunately faded from our faltering memories.

On a final note, we hope that those of you beginning your professional experiences with COLT will collect as many fond memories over the next twenty-five years, as we have in our work with this wonderful organization.

The School-College Committee

A Study in Cooperation

Robert P. Serafino

New Haven Public Schools, Retired

The perception of many high school foreign language teachers in the 1960s was that their students were going off to college with newly acquired oral language skills but that they were being put into literature courses, often taught in English, without much regard for maintaining and developing their oral skill. This was indeed sometimes the case, but not necessarily so. College instructors, on the other hand, often complained that students were arriving at college without a good foundation in grammar or writing skills. This also was sometimes the case, but again, not necessarily so. The then Connecticut State Foreign Language Consultant, Kenneth A. Lester, organized a state foreign language school-college committee to give the two groups an opportunity to sit down to talk to each other and to assist and improve the process of articulation between schools and colleges.

Kenneth wrote to the president of each college and university in Connecticut and invited each to appoint a foreign language faculty member to serve on the new committee. Each president did so, and the committee served on a volunteer basis and consisted primarily of foreign language coordinators from several school districts.

Monthly meetings were held, hosted by a different college or university each month. Useful information was passed back and forth, and much good will developed. One of the avenues that began to be explored was the one of having the high schools administer the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests in the four skills to all high school foreign language students and reporting the scores to the colleges. Since the State Department of Education was at that time averse to any kind of state sponsored testing, it was decided to separate the committee from the state office. The newly formed Connecticut Council of Language Teachers was asked to take over the committee. The Board of Directors of COLT agreed to this proposal, and the COLT School-College Committee was born.

One of the first things the new transferred committee decided to do was to seek to increase the number of school people on the committee, since the college members outnumbered the school representatives by a wide margin. A new invitation went out, this time to high school principals. The result was that a number of classroom teachers joined. The COLT sponsored, better balanced committee held its first meeting on May 7, 1968 at Albertus Magnus College. Donald D. Hook of Trinity College and co-chairpersons, establishing the tradition of a college person and a school person co-chairing the committee.

The first major work of the committee was published in 1972 under the title, "Goals, Reports of the School-College Committee." Kenneth Lester was the editor. The booklet consisted of a section entitled, "College Expectations for Secondary Foreign Language Students at the Completion of the Intermediate Phase," another section called "High School Expectation for Students in the Advanced Phase of Foreign Language Study in College," and finally a section on teacher education. A revision was published in 1977, with Donald D. Hook as editor. Another revision entitled, "Goals Revisited," was issued in 1986.

The School-College has through the years continued to meet to discuss problems of mutual concern to schools and colleges, ponders solutions, conduct surveys, disseminate information, and develop friendships among school and college foreign language teachers. For the past three years the committee has sponsored foreign language immersion weekends for teachers.

History of the Poetry Contest

John M. Darcey
West Hartford Public Schools

In October 1978 we were searching for activities which would involve many students, include several languages, be somewhat literary in nature, feature competition, and somehow allow us to invite college professors to participate.

We decided to have a poetry contest which would allow students in the languages which we taught to compete for prizes. The judges would be college professors and native speakers who, we hoped, would be impressed with the high quality of the students' oral skills. We developed guidelines for the contest and decided to enhance the competition by inviting two or three neighboring towns to join us.

When we called colleagues, they heard the words “poetry contest” and thought the students would be required to write poetry. Seeing the confusion, we changed the title to a “poetry recitation contest.”

The first year’s contest was scheduled for the spring of 1979 at the Sedgwick Junior High School in West Hartford. Competition would be limited to French, Italian, and Spanish. Two neighboring towns did agree to participate. The response from the college professors was very positive.

Naturally we were apprehensive that first year because we had no idea of the outcome of this activity. Although we did see the need for some rules, we decided to be as free as possible hoping to attract enough high school students to make the contest interesting.

That first year we tasted success and knew we had a winner. Each of the next two years we refined the rules and expanded by inviting other schools to participate. By 1980 it was obvious that this activity should become statewide and that it should be organized and sponsored by COLT. Fortunately, COLT accepted our offer and organized the first COLT sponsored Poetry Contest in 1981. The rest is a repetition of success after success. The numbers grew so rapidly that it became necessary to limit the number of participants from each school. The number of languages represented grew as did the number of schools participating.

The Poetry Contest has become the biggest and most successful COLT sponsored activity for students with 100 schools and more than 800 students involved this year. Moreover, its success is well known in many states and is considered one of the largest contests for students sponsored by a state foreign language organization.

Little did we know that what began as an experiment in Sedgwick Junior High School in 1979 would become such a success on the state level. One might ask what made it so popular and successful. Students enjoy reciting, they relish competition and COLT volunteers have done a magnificent job in organizing the activity each of the past twelve years.

Hip Hip Hooray: The Annual Poster Contest is Underway

William Jassey
Norwalk Public Schools

Il est bon de savoir quelque chose des moeurs de divers peuples, afin de juger des notres plus sainement, et que nous ne pensions pas que ce qui est contre nos modes soit ridicule et contre raison, ainsi qu’ont coutume de faire ceux qui ont rien vu. (Descartes, Discours de la Methode)

Students who study foreign languages in the State of Connecticut gain knowledge and appreciation of foreign peoples via annual poster contests sponsored by the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers. Posters lend excitement to the classroom and serve as an instructional tool for building the progressive development of cultural awareness beyond the classroom. It is our belief that a high degree of pupil expression is transmitted pictorially within the limits of pupil maturity and artistic experiences. Thus, the purpose of a poster contest is to build up interest in as well as the glamour of the global sphere impacting on American youth. For example, the theme of “Break the Communication Barrier –Learn a Foreign Language!” stresses the contact points between foreign language and English so as to highlight the study of a foreign language.

1993 marks the sixth annual event that highlights the hopeful anticipation of an even greater increase in pupil interest. It is well worth the effort of schools which participate in this happening. What better way to advertise the importance of foreign language study than through the creative art work of our students? No other subject affords so many opportunities for correlation than the field of art. Art serves as an instrument for developing desirable social attitudes, work habits, emotions, intellectual ability and manual skills that extend beyond the linguistic aspects of a foreign language program. It is to be noted that a shift from the target language to appreciate features through the medium of art lead to five –fold advantages. They are: (1) social attitudes – tolerance centered around themes (2) work habits – organization of materials with rules in mind (3) emotions –joy of participation (4) intellectual ability – use of appropriate words and expressions and (5) manual skills-constructive and artistic production. Thus, the judging criteria evolved in terms of relevancy of theme, visual impact, over-all appealing effect, neatness, originality, creativity and accuracy.

The laying of a foundation upon which to provide for pleasure of an immediate achievement appeals to the interest of youth. In fact, the annual poster contest has the provision of meaningful activity whereby all pupils can participate with a resulting feeling of satisfaction. All entrants receive a certificate of participation. Savings bonds and framed certificates are usually awarded to winners in the three categories of elementary, middle and high school. The COLT poster contest plaque and reprints of the grand prize poster winner are even recognized at the COLT Spring Conference.

Creating new and stimulating themes to interest pupils is a continuous challenge for COLT as a dynamic organization. Students feel a sense of accomplishment by seeing their work displayed in their own school; however five representative entries per school are selected and then viewed by the Poster Committee members. It is at this juncture that the rules of the contest are adhered to with precision.

In summary, to integrate the study of a language stressing interrelations between foreign cultures and ones' own highlights are and foreign languages in an interdisciplinary way. As professionals, we feel that the annual poster contest serves as a public relations event, thus bringing together the children, the parents, the teachers as well as the profession as a unifying under the purview of COLT.

COLT Immersion Programs

Vilma Mamrus, Fairfield Public Schools
Catherine Vigilante, Norwalk Public Schools, Retired

The first COLT sponsored Immersion Weekend was held June1-3, 1990. It was the product of a great deal of hard work on the part of the School-College Committee. Dr. Marco Arenas and Catherine Vigilante were the co-chairpersons of the event in which 25 teachers participated. Facilitators were available during the entire program. In the Spanish division; Dr. Marquela Arenas, Dr. Juan Godines and Ana Maria Rivero provided countless hours of oral practice for the participants. In the French division; Jacqueline de L. Skubly, Dr. William Jassey, Vilma Mamrus and Susan Granger served as informants for the participants. Presentations were made during the program by native speakers from several countries. There were delicious meals of authentic native dishes prepared by the leaders of each division. Music, dance and even aerobic exercises were enjoyed by all. Films, newspapers and small group discussions were available as well. All participants completed the programs by preparing skits or oral presentations for the entire group. A video highlighting special features of both French and Spanish

events was prepared and is available for viewing. Thanks are due to Central Connecticut State University for hosting the program and of course to COLT for subsidizing it.

The second COLT sponsored Immersion weekend was held June 26-28, 1992. Spanish was the only language program offered due to a limited response on the part of the French. Vilma Mamrus served as Chair and Dr. Marco Arenas was the Program Director. There were 16 participants.

Once again, the setting was Central Connecticut State University. Educators, consultants and specialists shared their academic knowledge and skills. There were lectures, political studies and cultural presentations. Several graduate assistants from South America kept the conversation flowing with individual and group discussions. Films, music and songs were available each evening. The food service department of the University provided all meals with the exception of the superb Paella prepared by Dr. Arenas.

The program ended Sunday afternoon with the presentation of skits, the awarding of certificates and the gratitude of all those who had participated in the Immersion Program.

The third COLT sponsored Immersion Program is scheduled for June 27-30, 1993 at Yale University. This program will be available to teachers of French, Spanish and Portuguese. It is titled "The African Diaspora." It will study the wealth of the African contribution to those areas of the American world where French, Spanish and Portuguese are spoken. The program is under the direction of Dr. Marco Arenas, Wilma Mamrus and Mary Anne D'Amato.

COLT and the Beginning Teacher

Nancy Grisevich
Burr and Batchelder Schools

Perhaps like many new teachers, my first years in the teaching profession sped by with days and nights full of lesson plans, meetings, discussions with colleagues, etc. in the hopes of trying to understand my students, make teaching meaningful, and just survive the 180-plus days between summer vacations in this place called school. Adjusting to school rules and procedures, getting to know students, parents and staff, and wading through paperwork were enough to overwhelm me. Now after five years I can definitely say I have survived and learned some valuable lessons, thanks to the help of many who have advised and encouraged me along the way, including some caring individuals at COLT.

It was easy for me to become interested in COLT as many of my colleagues were involved and looked forward to COLT-sponsored activities such as the Fall Conference and the Poetry Recitation Contest. As I participated, I too found friendships with teachers scattered in different schools, picked up some new ideas, browsed through materials and learned more about my profession. The Poetry Recitation Contest in particular has been a very exciting and rewarding experience for my students. It offers them an opportunity to work hard toward the goal of memorizing and interpreting a poem. The enthusiasm generated by hundreds of participating students is a sight to see and an event they will not soon forget.

COLT also extended to me the privilege of being chosen as a Northeast Conference Fellow, providing a scholarship to attend the Northeast Conference which is held in April of every year. Participating in this

conference was a memorable experience to say the least, allowing me as a new teacher to meet and learn from new and veteran teachers in stimulating workshops.

As I continue in my profession I know that these opportunities and more will help me grow and be the best teacher that I can be. Thank you to all in COLT who are working to provide these opportunities and resources.

Perspectives of the COLT Founders

Christine L. Brown
Glastonbury Public Schools

On this the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, my thoughts turn to the individuals who worked so hard to establish COLT as the successful professional organization it is today. Names like Ken Lester, Toby Tamarkin, Bob Mead, Bob Serafino, Doris Barry Owens, Morton Briggs, Jack Darcey, Marie Diamond, Helen Amaral, and countless other tireless COLT members come to my mind.

These educators gave up evenings and weekends to plan conferences and workshops, as well as to run an organization for the professional enrichment of the language teachers in Connecticut. What set these individuals apart was their effort to find new and inexperienced teachers such as me to participate in organizational activities. These educators were committed to the concept of selfless mentoring to enhance the quality of teachers' lives.

Foreign language teaching can be a lonely profession sandwiched in between the required academics and the electives. Without professional mentors, language teachers are often left out of school based professional development initiatives and rarely targeted for large scale national or state professional initiatives. We truly need to help each other to grow and become professionally active. As I reflect on my twentieth teaching year in Connecticut, I can say without doubt that were it not for the remarkable members of COLT, I would not have the fortitude to continue as a teacher or supervisor. I learned a tremendous amount from watching Ken Lester or Toby Tamarkin conduct a workshop. Marie Diamond and Helen Amaral knew how to make an organization hum with activities and heartfelt courtesies. When Bob Mead, Morton Briggs, and Bob Serafino talked, everyone listened for theirs were the voices of reason and insight. Jack Darcey and Doris Barry Owens brought organization, fiscal responsibility, and levity to the meetings and conferences. Many new and inexperienced teachers learned valuable lessons from the COLT founders. Remarkably, most of the founders are still active in COLT today.

One who is sorely missed is Helen Amaral, a devoted COLT member, president, outstanding language teacher and supervisor. During her work with COLT, Helen chaired committees, chaired the Spring and Fall Conferences, served as Vice-President, President, and Past President, as well as conducted countless workshops. She was a concerned and sensitive professional who went out of her way to empower new teachers. She served as a mentor and professional friend. Her influence and commitment is remembered by the establishment of the Helen Amaral Fund and Award. This award enables a COLT member to study abroad. It is a fitting remembrance of one who devoted so much to all of us.

Service to Our Profession

Josette Eynon
The Wooster School, Danbury

I first joined the Board of Directors of COLT in 1980 under the suggestion of my Department Head who had given my name to Ingrid Petty, the president at the time. I did not know much about the organization or its activities. I had no acquaintances among its membership. Helen Amaral became my mentor and patiently explained what COLT was and did. Helen and I promptly became friends as well as colleagues.

When she succeeded Christine Brown as President she was able to implement many of her goals and ideas. Her accomplishments are many but I would like to outlight the closer ties she was able to have established between schools and institutions of higher learning through the work of COLT School-College Committee. She also worked closely with the Connecticut Humanities Council to offer to all foreign language teachers summer workshops and/or Institutes.

Helen felt very strongly about COLT and wanted it to be of greater service to its membership, particularly in the way of financial support for special projects. Her dream was to establish scholarship for summer work or travel by foreign language teaches. It is unfortunate that she did not live long enough to see her vision become reality with the creation of such a scholarship two years ago. It is fitting that it is named after her.

With such fine example in strong, humane leadership for our organization, I could but try to follow. I hope I did her justice and was also of some help and guidance to the Connecticut foreign language profession during my tenure.

The New Approach to Foreign Language

Emily S. Peel
Wethersfield Public Schools

A Zambian proverb says, "Begin where you are but don't stay there." It is good advice for all of us. Our ethnic diversity at home and growing global interdependence have raised economic, political and social issues which emphasize international education and the need to experience how other cultures think and live. The impact of our changing world has joined research on effective learning to forge an instructional revolution, particularly in foreign languages. That coalition now challenges teachers, administrators, and policymakers to change perspective and approach, to lay aside old ways, and to embrace the new. For effective schools in the 1990s, we need to join this instructional revolution.

A few years ago, Connecticut was a national leader in foreign language enrollments and had a reputation for being on the cutting edge. We were the first state to create and administer a proficiency test of five skills in five languages. Today, we no longer lead in enrollments or in innovation. We have fallen behind states which have foreign language mandates and make early foreign language study part of the core curriculum. Teachers in some other states are at least five years ahead of us. They have extensive programs at the elementary level (including Latin) and have instituted new approaches to effective foreign language learning.

The new focus is on what the learner CAN DO WITH the language rather than what the learner KNOWS ABOUT the language. It is a major shift in design from one which has emphasized rote memorization to one in which communication is the driving force. (In classical languages, reading is the driving force.) It is a design in which students from the beginning address needs, give descriptions, state wishes, comment and defend opinions, and practice culturally appropriate behavior. They learn to express themselves in meaningful situations and develop their ability to think critically, listen and understand, speak, read with meaning, and write.

The goals are to make learning integrative, meaningful, and personally relevant to students. Essential features include: (a) the use of “real” language, which is spoken and written by and for native speakers; it is what is called “authentic texts,” and resources include videos, tapes, newspapers, magazines, and other printed material; (b) the integration of higher order thinking skills at every level, including beginner’s; (c) the expansion of learning by spiraling or re-entering familiar themes in a planned sequence to enable learners to use more sophisticated language and become more culturally aware; and (d) a longer sequence of study to allow learners the time it takes to develop new communication skills beyond the novice and intermediate levels.

For teachers, this curriculum shift represents change that is hard even though it makes sense. For years, we have defined our teaching by chapters of the grammar taught and the books completed. Still, we have known that what we teach is not always what students learn or remember. We have known that only a few students have elected to continue a language beyond college entrance requirements and, if they do not intend to go to college, they do not enroll in foreign language study at all. We have supported or left unchallenged for too long the myth that languages, including Latin, are not for everyone. Our methods and program design have made it so. Until now.

Four major factors have altered forever our path: the national need for language and cultural competency, research on how we acquire a second language, the *American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines*, and extensive education studies on how we learn.

FACT: Virtually all children can learn to understand and communicate in another language, particularly if they begin early in elementary school and remain in a sequential, well-planned program through the 12th grade.

FACT: Research shows that second language study improves native language skills, SAT scores, and other testing results.

Our path is clear. From kindergarten through twelfth grade we must introduce and deliver longer foreign language programs that are age-appropriate, more content-specific, and integrated with other curricular areas. These programs must reflect current research and the realities of what an educated citizen needs now and for the 21st century.

Once implemented, such programs would realize the 1987 Guidelines on Culture and Language set for in CONNECTICUT’S COMMON CORE OF LEARNING, guidelines which advocate that: *As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to understand and communicate in at least one language in addition to English...recognize the commonalities and differences that exist in the structure of languages...and demonstrate an understanding of other cultures and their roles in international affairs.*

To make that happen, we must cultivate an all-inclusive perspective and mesh how we teach with how we learn. We must:

- Give students activities and experiences embedded in a meaningful, personally relevant context;
- Use themes such as family or leisure to organize information and create patterns which students can recall;
- Offer questions and exercises that are open-ended to encourage student creativity;
- Communicate in the language most of the time to create a classroom “cultural island”;
- Create a positive environment, fun and free from embarrassment, in which students dare to risk error for the sake of learning;
- Foster a collaborative role for students, particularly in assessment; empower them to think for themselves and encourage them to be life-long lovers of learning.

To join our colleagues in this national movement and replicate effective foreign language learning in our schools, Connecticut foreign language teachers must obtain the active support of the Connecticut State Department of Education and Board of Education, local Boards, administrators, and parents. We need ongoing professional development in the new foreign language approach, assessment practices, and program design. We need expert curriculum leadership and resources that provide “authentic texts”. Particularly crucial is access to the new textbooks and technology which are revolutionizing language learning everywhere. Videos and satellite programs can bring the language and the culture right into the classroom. FAX machines can link our classrooms with those abroad. Computers can provide creative writing practice as well as review and drill. The language labs of today have state-of-the-art curriculum and technology which interest and engage students in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Technology that is increasingly so much a part of other subjects ought to be part of foreign language learning. The immediacy of its visual and auditory messages communicates and reinforces authentic language and culture as no textbook can.

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The COLT Connection at the State Department of Education

Mary Ann Hansen, Connecticut State Department of Education

All students should have the opportunity to study a foreign language, and the earlier they start, the better. Developing linguistic and cultural proficiencies is becoming more important as we move to a global economy. We need to offer instruction in foreign languages for the benefit of our children and our future.

Data from the Department of Education’s 1993, **A Profile of Our Schools**, indicate that all comprehensive high schools in Connecticut offer instruction in both French and Spanish. However, little or no instruction is offered in languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Arabic or Korean, which are identified in the Foreign Languages Assistance Act as critical to our national and security interests. Moreover, all students in Connecticut do not have equal access or exposure to foreign language instruction. High-poverty schools are less likely to offer the depth of foreign language offerings than low

or moderate poverty schools, and students in high-poverty schools are less likely to take foreign languages. In addition, larger schools are more likely to offer a greater number of languages and extracurricular activities related to foreign languages.

Distance learning technology is one method which is providing many districts with the ability to expand language offerings and course sequence length. Exchange programs and computer links with other countries are motivating students to study foreign languages and learn about other cultures. Schools with foreign language as a theme, including two-way bilingual programs in which language-majority and language-minority students work together becoming bilingual, are successful models for magnet schools in many states.

Clearly, access, equity and high standards are issues in foreign language instruction which we need to address. We must work toward improving the breadth and depth of foreign languages offerings while maintaining quality programs for all students.

American Association of Teachers of French

Carolyn Demaray, President CT AATF

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Connecticut Council of Language Teaches the Connecticut chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French salutes you. The AATF is most appreciative of your support of and long-standing interest in foreign language study in Connecticut.

A state chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French is certainly alive and well and active in Connecticut. For the past several years we have had nearly 300 members, many of who are very active and whose help and suggestions we appreciate. An executive board plans two meetings annually, one in the fall and one in the spring, at which we try to have interesting speakers and /or student presentations. For example, this spring at a dinner meeting we will have the pleasure of hearing Professor Benjamin Semple of Yale University who will speak to us about Christine de Pizan, and as well we will be viewing student videos submitted from around the state to our newly instituted video contest. Next October we will join with COLT of the multi-language conference day for our fall meeting. The last New England Congress Regional of the AATF was sponsored and organized by the executive board of the Connecticut Chapter of the AATF, and it certainly met with success and received many accolades.

For the past five years the Grand Concours has been most ably and practically single-handedly organized by executive board member Thomas Betts of Amity High School, and for his extraordinary devotion to seeing that Connecticut students participate in this nationwide contest we are most grateful. There are in excess of 2000 exams administered, and Connecticut always boasts a number of winners, a testament to the inspired teaching of French statewide.

The Connecticut Chapter of the AATF is particularly proud of two funds established recently in an effort to stimulate interest in and the study of French statewide: the first is a student scholarship fund, and the second is a teacher development fund. Two scholarships are awarded annually to talented students who will be continuing their study of French at the university level. Deserving seniors who are studying French with a Connecticut chapter member are nominated by their teacher and write a short exposé on the importance of French to them. The applications are reviewed by a committee of both high school

and college level teachers, and then finalists are chosen. The ten finalists are then interviewed in French and two recipients selected. For the past several years the Connecticut chapter of the AATF has sponsored all members who wish to attend one of the local summer institutes. We plan to continue this practice and encourage our members to take advantage of this opportunity to keep themselves current.

Tout ceci dans un effort de propager l'étude de cette langue, de cette culture, et de cette civilisation que nous sont si chères. Nous vous invitons à être des nôtres!

Connecticut Italian Teachers Association

Marylee DiGennaro, President, CITA

The relationship between CITA, the Connecticut Italian Teachers Association, and COLT has been one of mutual benefit and cooperation throughout the years. As both organizations have grown, the involvement of CITA and its members with COLT has developed and strengthened. Besides being an organizational director of the COLT Board, CITA also participates actively in all COLT functions.

For many years CITA has given its support and sponsored workshops in the COLT Fall Conference. The greater arena of this conference has given CITA the opportunity to make itself known and increase its membership, while its members have benefitted greatly from the professional contact with other language teachers, the stimulating pedagogical workshops and presentations and the opportunity to view new materials.

Each spring many language teachers throughout the state accompany their students to the COLT sponsored Poetry Recitation Contest. This event is avidly attended and enthusiastically received by both teachers and student of many foreign languages. Italian students also have enjoyed participation in this contest since its inception. Previous to that time, from 1978 to 1980, CITA itself had sponsored and organized its own recitation contest for middle, high school and college students of Italian throughout the state. The success of this contest was influential in the establishment of the COLT Poetry Recitation Contest the following year.

CITA has greatly appreciated the opportunities which our affiliation with COLT has afforded the Italian teachers of Connecticut and looks forward to the continued cooperation between our organizations.

German Studies in Connecticut Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Krishna Winston, Secretary
Connecticut Chapter AATG

Connecticut members of the American Association of Teachers of German whose connection with the organization goes back twenty or twenty-five years can recall spring and fall meetings that drew crowds of sixty or eighty German teachers. They can recall thronged awards banquets at the Harugari Singing Society in West Haven. They can recall that new German instructors at Yale and UCONN and Wesleyan would be given to understand that holding office in the AATG was expected. In those days cooperation between secondary schools and colleges and universities flourished. Things certainly looked promising for a field of study that twice in the twentieth century had been almost wiped out as the result of world wars instigated by Germany.

In fact, foreign language study was thriving in the late sixties and early seventies. The graduate schools were receiving funds under the National Defense Education Act, Title IV that supported many a graduate student in language and literature. The Connecticut Department of Education could pay the salary of a foreign language consultant, COLT founder Dr. Kenneth Lester, whose job it was to keep track of and nurture foreign language studies in Connecticut.

Today the picture is very different, at both the secondary and post-secondary level. In town after town, German has been dropped altogether as public-school budgets have had to stretch to cover more and more state-mandated programs. German teachers have found themselves increasingly embattled, called upon to justify their field in the face of hostile administrators and indifferent parents. Often secondary-school German teachers have had to begin teaching English or social studies as a way of fulfilling their teaching obligation. It is even difficult to find out in which schools German is still offered, because Dr. Lester was not replaced when he retired. At the colleges and universities, the overall trend in German enrollments has been downward, with a slight upward movement during the exciting period after the fall of the Berlin Wall. German Departments have shrunk as a result. And young faculty members have come under increasing pressure to do research and publish; no one encourages them to make common cause with the secondary-school teachers who, after all, teach the students who will later be theirs.

These developments help explain why gathering of German teachers often resemble the scene in the six chapter of Part 9 of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* in which several middle-aged merchants from Lubeck sit gloomily in rainy Travemunde and over their grog contemplate the decline of society as they knew it and confront their own mortality.

Yet, new opportunities exist for making the study of German attractive. At the college and graduate level, the evolving field of German Studies allows the integration of political science, economics, music, art, film, and many other fields into the study of German. UCONN has developed programs leading to combined degrees in German and business and German and engineering. At all levels, technological support from computers and videodiscs can help make the study of language and culture enjoyable to today's students, who are more comfortable with electronic devices than their elders. The creation of proficiency models has made objective assessment of student progress possible. Finally, now that German is once more the lingua franca of Eastern Europe, the riches of German culture and Germany's economic power are no longer the only reasons for learning the language. Teachers motivated by genuine interest in things German must seize these opportunities and working together at all levels, revive the field of German studies for the third time in this century.

Twenty-Five Years of Collaboration of AATSP and COLT

Marco A. Arenas, President
Connecticut Chapter AATSP

Shortly after my arrival in Connecticut in 1965, the Teachers Convention Day in October offered opportunities to meet other language teachers and to learn from colleagues from all over the state other ways and resources to enhance teaching and learning.

As I became involved in the activities of the Connecticut Chapter of AATSP, in 1968 I served as chair of the program committee, and a long career of engagement and service began. This was the year that

COLT came to be the state language organization embracing the AATs. Over the years COLT has become the voice of language teachers in Connecticut as it was founded to foster dialogue and cooperation among professionals of various languages. From 1970-76 I served as president of the Connecticut Chapter of AATSP and thus served as a member of the Board of Directors of COLT. At the time efforts were made to establish a spring conference as we tried a somewhat unorthodox format. I remember well chairing the committee that planned the first two Spring Conferences. One was held at Saint Joseph College and the other was held at Wolcott Park in West Hartford. At the latter we had a paella dinner and a session on international folk dancing led by Harold and Bertha Dobkin and Cy and Lynn Levine. Jane Burke supplied French songs and music for the occasion and the meeting on a Saturday late May became a fun-filled cultural activity.

It was our thinking at the time that there was more to language than grammar rules and verb paradigms! Language was understood as a living element that gave form to social and interpersonal behaviors. Ethnic good such as a paella dinner and sangria and French quiche and chocolate mousse were served. Singing and playing games in the languages engaged everyone attending.

In 1974 John Dwyer and Marco A. Arenas started a newsletter for AATSP members. A year later the newsletter appeared with the name MACONDO, a title borrowed from Garcia Marques "*Cien años de soledad*".

As we look at the pages of MACONDO of those years we find information about George Cushman of Choate-Rosemary Hall who served as treasurer of AATSP and about Toby Tamarkin when she first was a candidate to the SCTFL Executive Council and about her involvement in the national scene. MACONDO offered the national perspective in a nutshell.

The Connecticut Chapter of AATSP has seen periods of great activity and has always been a strong supporter of COLT. At AATSP we have always felt that progress in one language is good news for all other languages. Robert G. Mead, Jr. has been a strong support of AATSP and COLT. His contribution to AATSP and his support of COLT and of the Northeast Conference are a matter of record and of great inspiration to many of us. COLT has done well working for all languages in Connecticut and at all levels, from FLES to the University.

The various services offered by COLT created an atmosphere of goodwill, sustained by the unselfish work of a number of people such as Arthur Selvi, Morton Briggs, Robert Serafino, Kenneth A. Lester, Jane Burke and many more. Many of the hard working language leaders in Connecticut have gone to serve and be recognized at the national level. Lately, COLT has grown in size, scope and efficiency. More sophisticated planning and utilization of human resources involve larger numbers of language teachers and students. Of special interest are the *Total Language Immersion Weekend Program for Teachers* and for students organized by persons involved with COLT. *The Poetry Contest* and *the Poster Contest* are but a few of the programs and services supported by COLT.

Since we are reminiscing, I very well recall the time when Zenia Sacks DaSilva who was president of AATSP was the keynote speaker at a spring conference held at the Hilton Hotel in Hartford. A group of Ukrainian dancers from New Haven performed their dances, and to do so they spread flour on the stage floor for their dances. The following group of dancers to perform was the Rancho Portuguese from Hartford. The problem arose when they walked on the stage and indicated that they could not dance on such a slippery floor. The Master of Ceremonies went to the hotel manager to request that the floor be swept, but such a request could not be met, since there were no union members available who could

use the brooms to sweep the floor. The Master of Ceremonies asked the audience for permission to sweep the floor and proceeded to clean the stage. Shortly after, the program went on as planned. This year the spring meeting of AATSP will be held on May 15, 1993 at Yale University. Save the date. Let us celebrate the 25 years of COLT!

Congratulatory Wishes to the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers On the Occasion of its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

Donna Lyons, President
Classical Association of Connecticut

The Latin teachers of the state of Connecticut maintain a strong voice and a vital role in shaping the language students of our schools, our commitment to the teaching of classics and the ancient world is a perfect complement to the instruction of modern languages and contemporary culture. Side by side with colleagues who teach other world languages, we strive to bring our students to an understanding of languages and of history. We work to give them a sense of cultures whose roots span civilizations. This power of communication, this linguistic energy, becomes a force itself which guides and supports our students throughout their lives.

Under the aegis of COLT the Latin teachers of Connecticut have grown and diversified. We have shared the beginning aspirations of the language studies in the state and have been a part of the significant legislation and direction of linguistic methodologies. Far from being an older shadow of the new philology, Connecticut's Latin teachers have served as spirited advisors and respected mentors in our alliance with modern language teachers.

In 1986 the Executive Committee of the Connecticut Section of the Classical Association of New England voted to dissolve that state extension of C.A.N.E. and incorporate as the independent Classical Association of Connecticut. ClassConn's history, although more recent than the twenty-five life of COLT, includes a dedication to the integration of studies and the common bond of sharing the responsibility of teaching language and culture with our modern language colleagues at all levels of education. Our vitality thrives on the accord we share with the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers.

Pegasus, the winged horse, the fiery steed tamed by Bellerophon, is the symbol of COLT. How often in curriculum discussions have classical and modern languages been set apart on two sides of a table by descriptions or departmental goals? Yet, here in Connecticut, those two linguistic studies meld and become a whole. And, above the masthead of our timely newsletter flies the distinctly classical beast.

Twenty-five years ago this organization dedicated to the fostering of foreign language study in the state of Connecticut became a reality. From the former active state body, the Connecticut Advisory Committee on Foreign Languages, COLT evolved. The equine acronym was created by our tireless advocate in the state, the region, and at the national level, Dr. Kenneth Lester. How appropriate that the plume atop our fledging association is Pegasus, the winged charger of classical lore whose swift kicking hoof, legend tells us, caused the fountain of the Muses to flow!

A Peek Into The Next Quarter-Century!

Sharon Buckley-Van Hoek, President
Connecticut Council of Language Teachers

Anniversary is a time to look back and to reminisce – but it is also an opportunity to look ahead and to try to define the direction for the future. It is obvious as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of COLT and hear from the individuals who have provided us with a sense of its history that the organization has evolved over time as it has adjusted to meet the needs of its members. Adaptation and evolution are critical to the survival of a viable organization, and I anticipate that the next quarter – century of COLT's existence will bring some substantial changes to the organization.

COLT will undoubtedly continue to offer programs based on the needs and interests of its members and their students. However, I expect that COLT will also play a greater role in the political/legislative process at the state level and will forge increased collaboration and networking with other language organizations which we have seen in the recent past and which are making possible efforts such as the development of national standards will no doubt continue and expand, making COLT a part of a much larger and more powerful voice for language teachers.

Magnet schools that include a solid foreign language component, or that use a foreign language as a vehicle of instruction to deliver the curriculum content are logical ways to achieve some of the goals toward which we work daily and which are an integral component in the state's movement toward increased regionalization and multicultural diversity. These schools, however, will not come about without a great deal of effort and support from all of us across the state; hence the need for greater participation in the legislative process.

Businesses within Connecticut are increasingly aware of the need for personnel who can understand and communicate in other languages. Several companies are already investing in the development of these skills for selected employees. As global competition increases into the next century, the need for such skills across the business spectrum will become even more apparent. There is substantial potential for support of the language profession from the business community as this awareness increases. Critical to that support, however, is the capacity of language programs to, in essence “deliver the goods” – i.e. to produce many students with some level of functional proficiency and with understanding of a culture.

Our movement in the direction of national standards, fostered by the umbrella organization of ACTFL, will assist with this process. By developing a consensus of what students should know and should be able to do, we will be giving ourselves a road-map or a guide to a common goal: better outcomes and more success for more students. As a profession we will gain greater credibility with the public at large as a result.

We are on the threshold of an important era in education, and I believe the language profession as a whole, and the individual members included therein, are positioned nicely to have a very positive impact on the changes which are inevitable. We have the potential not only to influence process, but to be leaders in that process, both in our individual school systems and collectively throughout the state.

We need to recognize – and make others aware of the strengths that we have. That, it seems to me, is the challenge for us as an organization as we embark on our second quarter-century.

Officers of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers

1968-1970		
President	Kenneth A. Lester	FL Consultant, CSDE
Vice-President	Robert Serafino	FL Supervisor, New Haven Public Schools
Secretary	Janice Calkin	Director FL, Greenwich Public Schools
Treasurer	Doris Barry	Charter Oak School (West Hartford)
1970-1972		
President	Robert Serafino	FL Supervisor, New Haven Public Schools
Vice-President	Edward Bourque	FL Consultant, Fairfield Public Schools
Secretary	Toby Tamarkin	Manchester Community College
Treasurer	Doris Barry	Charter Oak School (West Hartford)
1972-1974		
President	Edward Bourque	FL Consultant, Fairfield Public Schools
Vice-President	Toby Tamarkin	Manchester Community College
Secretary	Nellie Agostino	East Hartford High School
Treasurer	Doris Barry	Charter Oak School (West Hartford)
1974-1976		
President	Toby Tamarkin	Manchester Community College
Vice-President	Donald Johnson	Stratford High School
Secretary	Irene Stanislawczyk	Central CT State University
Treasurer	Doris Barry	Charter Oak School (West Hartford)
1976-1978		
President	John Darcey	Director FL, West Hartford Public Schools
Vice-President	Yolande Petrin	West Hartford Public Schools

Recording Secretary	Harry Ardonlino	Southern CT State University
Corresponding Secretary	Irene Stanislawczyk	Central CT State University
Treasurer	Julie Barcelo	Simsbury High School
1978-1980		
President	Frieda Stegerwald	Cheshire High School
Vice-President	Jay Cretella	Wallingford Public Schools
Recording Secretary	Robert Packard	Old Saybrook High School
Corresponding Secretary	Irene Stanislawczyk	Central CT State University
Treasurer	Ingrid Petty	Hall High School (West Hartford)
1980-1982		
President	Ingrid Petty	Hall High School (West Hartford)
Vice-President	Irene Stanislawczyk	Central CT State University
Recording Secretary	Helen Amaral	FL Dept. Head, Newtown High School
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Foley	West Hartford Public Schools
Treasurer	Thomas Cracas	The Kent School
1982-1984		
President	Marie Diamond	FL Dept. Head, North Haven High School
Vice-President	Helen Amaral	FL Dept. Head, Newtown High School
Recording Secretary	Robert Italia	Windsor High School
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Foley	West Hartford Public Schools
Treasurer	Thomas Cracas	The Kent School
1984-1986		
President	Christine L. Brown	Director FL, Glastonbury Public Schools
Vice-President	Helen Amaral	FL Dept. Head, Newtown High School
Recording Secretary	Juliann Hulten	Foran High School, Milford
Corresponding Secretary	Maureen Mugavin	Wooster School (Danbury)
Treasurer	Robert Bergen	East Hartford High School

1986-1988		
President	Helen Amaral	FL Dept. Head, Newtown High School
Vice-President	Josette Eynon	Wooster School (Danbury)
Recording Secretary	Emily S. Peel	FL Dept. Head, Wethersfield Public Schools
Corresponding Secretary	Maureen Mugavin	Wooster School (Danbury)
Treasurer	Robert Bergen	East Hartford High School
1988-1990		
President	Josette Eynon	Wooster School (Danbury)
Vice-President	Emily S. Peel	FL Dept. Head, Wethersfield Public Schools
Recording Secretary	Lorraine Curran	Sedgwick Middle School (West Hartford)
Corresponding Secretary	Margaret Nocturne	Joel Barlow Reg. High School, Redding
Treasurer	Robert Bergen	East Hartford High School
1990-1992		
President	Emily S. Peel	FL Dept. Head, Wethersfield Public Schools
Vice-President	Sharon Buckley-VanHoek	Coordinator of Alternate Languages, Hartford P.S.
Treasurer	Fred Lougee	Central CT State University
Recording Secretary	Jane Graveen	Glastonbury Public Schools
Corresponding Secretary	Danuta Thibodeau	FL Dept. Head, Bethel High School
Immediate Past President	Josette Eynon	Wooster School (Danbury)
1992-1994		
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