

SUSANews: The SIETAR-USA Newsletter

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1. Letter from the President

Happy New Year! Starting off a new year always provides me with a sense of hope and renewal and at the same time, a sense of appreciation for all that has been accomplished –looking back at what has occurred, and the commitment to what more needs to be done. Whatever your New Year rituals, resolutions or celebrations are, I hope you are looking forward to including SUSA in your plans, and joining us for a wonderful year of activity and community.

As I start this year with SUSA, I have a profound sense of appreciation for all that has happened in the past year. I start by expressing my appreciation to all the volunteers who continue to shape SUSA; the many volunteers who helped make the SUSA Annual Conference in New Jersey, the Conference presenters who showed their scholarship and new vistas for our field to explore, and to you and all our participants who attended the Conference, and to our generous sponsors and exhibitors without whom we could not have put on the conference.

Thanks and deep appreciation go to our hardworking SUSA Board members who have

not missed a beat, and are currently working on expanding and improving the upcoming 2006 conference in Albuquerque, NM in November under the guidance of Jan O'Brien, our conference chair. Thanks to Heather Robinson for her enthusiastic leadership these past two years, and who now will guide us ably as Past President, and our new Board member Patricia Coleman, and the rest of the returning Board members. We welcome Monica F. Marcel, our new Newsletter Editor, who is working with Sandy Fowler, to transition into this position that Sandy has held for the past eight years. We are proud to have conferred the *Optime Merens de Collegis* Award at this past conference to Peggy Pusch and Sandy Fowler who continue to inspire us.

What I will focus on this year will be to expand our membership benefits, to support our local groups which continue to grow and sponsor important activities, support our Special Interest Groups, and work to continue to invite and include professionals from diverse backgrounds and career areas. I look forward to our continued rich partnership with our regional SIETAR global partners. We appreciate and thank the many representatives who attended the SUSA fall conference, and we look to cooperating and

collaborating with our good friends around the globe.

Our dedicated Board members have been working on their portfolio responsibilities through their committees. This is a great team of folks who are enthusiastic and committed to making SUSA a great organization. We will meet again for our third annual retreat this spring where we will gather in Portland, OR hosted by Peggy and Lew Pusch in their home. This is an intensely focused several days working with our organizational specialist and consultant, Ann MacFarlane, as we further outline ways in which we can create, design, and develop programs that serve you and SUSA best. I believe this time we spend in consultation and working together to be a key to our success in moving SUSA forward.

We welcome you to join us in all of these efforts as we are always looking for new ideas and new ways of creating community. During our last conference, I spoke with many of you who were interested in being more active in SUSA. As a professional volunteer organization, we want your participation and we understand your time limits. I can assure you that no matter how much time you would like to devote to SUSA, we can accommodate your interest – from just a few hours whether virtually (much of our work is done via email and/or phone conferences) or in person as in volunteering a few hours while at our annual conference. We have a variety of committees that could use your enthusiasm and ideas. Give me a call (509-777-4572) or drop me a line (email: elouie@whitworth.edu) and share your interest and expertise with us.

Wishing you all a great New Year and great beginnings. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in Albuquerque, NM for our annual conference November 1-4, 2006.

Esther Louie
President, SIETAR USA

2. Annual Conference November 1-4, 2006 Save the Dates

Almost before the enthusiastic comments about the last S-USA conference in New Jersey began

to cool, we were thinking about Conference 2006. Before jumping into that topic, however, I'd like to report that despite some crankiness around the costs in New Jersey/New York, everyone loved being there. There was recognition that given the spectacular venue, the prices were actually very reasonable and the ease of getting into Manhattan greatly appreciated. That is my last word on costs! The conference met the expectations of most participants, the exchanges that occurred were rewarding, and the program was excellent. We are most grateful for the work of the New York Conference Committee, led by Diane McGreal and Tara Nielsen. Diane and Tara demonstrated the gracious face of NJ/NY as well as the work ethic that made this conference a huge success.

As for Conference 2006, plans are well on their way and a committee. Chaired by Jan O'Brien, is hard at work planning the program, pre-conference workshops, and other events. We will be meeting at the Albuquerque Hilton ([www. \)](http://www.albuquerquehilton.com) with its adobe décor and central location. The room rate is \$109 plus tax per night and we'll be able to provide both breakfast and lunch during the conference that will take place November 1-4, 2006 (November 1 is pre-conference workshop day). The Call for Proposals has been posted on www.sietarusa.org. Several proposals have arrived and, now that holiday observances have been completed (except Chinese New Year) and decorations have been cleared away, we look forward to receiving more soon. The theme is "Interculturalists in the World: Ahead of the Curve or Behind the Times?" which suggests looking at the developments within the field and the degree to which interculturalists reach out to the rest of the world. It also urges us to explore where the field needs to go and places where particular attention is needed.

I would like to express my personal gratitude for the *Optime Merens de Collegi* award that Sandy Fowler and I received during the conference. It was totally unexpected as we each knew about the other but had no idea about ourselves. It is hard to keep a secret about this sort of thing for a long period of time and those planning the award managed to do so with the skill of well-trained guard dogs. Neither Sandy or I have engaged in this work with the expectation of awards. It is always nice to have your work recognized but it must be acknowledged that all of you made it possible with your support and your willingness to be part of the experimentation that is part of

creating new organizations and relationships, and reaching new heights in our field.

We are, collectively, looking forward to a grand new year and wish the same for each of you, individually.

Peggy Pusch
Executive Director

3. New Awards Given at Conferences

SIETAR USA created an award this year in recognition of long-standing contributions to the Society. Borrowed from the academic world, the award is the *Optime Merens de Collegis* Award, meaning an award to the most deserving of the colleagues.

The incoming and outgoing Presidents of the Society Heather Robinson and Esther Louie bestowed this honor during one of the conference lunches to two women deemed the most deserving recipients. Peggy Pusch, past President and Executive Director, who used her knowledge, commitment and resourcefulness to turn the dream of SIETAR USA into a reality was the first recipient of the award. Glen Sebera was honored to present the award to Peggy citing that she was the first person to welcome him to SIETAR USA several years ago and has been a mentor to him since. Without Peggy there would be no SIETAR USA.

The other recipient of the *Optime Merens* award was Sandy Fowler. Sandy has worked with Peggy since the inception of SUSA to create the organization as we know it. Sandy is a past President of SIETAR International, Editor of the SUSA Slate and SUSA Newsletter, and has been on the Board of Directors for eight years. Sandy's organizational skills have been invaluable to the organization. Sandy's daughter, Monica Mumford, a long time member of SIETAR, presented the award to her. Some members of the audience were brought to tears as Sandy's daughter Monica presented the award to her explaining to the audience that Sandy "introduced her to the intercultural field and is her hero and her best friend."

SPEAKING OF AWARDS:

SIETAR Europa initiated a new award this year, the Lifetime Achievement Award, which was given to George Simons, Peggy Pusch, André Cresson, and Mieke Janssen during the 2005 conference in France in September. Peggy, in response, wrote the following:

"It is with considerable humility that I send my gratitude for the Lifetime Achievement Award that I received last week at your annual conference. To say I was surprised is an understatement; I was absolutely astonished! It was a great honor especially given the company I was in, three outstanding interculturalists who have served the intercultural field admirably over many years. It was a joy to receive this award with them since I have known Andre, Meike, and George for more years than any of us, I suspect, care to count. I have no memory of what I said that evening but I think I indicated that this award is, in a sense, held for all those who have made connections across cultures possible. It is the work of many rather than few and I hope I have been a small example of how that might be accomplished. I cannot thank you enough for an honor that means a great deal to me personally and professionally. I will proudly display the remarkable sculpture that was presented to me because it has meaning on many levels and because it is a very handsome piece of art."

http://www.sietar-europa.org/about_us/Newsletter/newsflashes/nov05.htm

You can see a photo of the four and Peggy's letter to Europa at the web site above. It was a delight to see so many old friends in Europe and so many people from SIETAR USA. There was a rather large delegation of S-USA members to the conference and many of our members were presenters.

4. Local Group News

SIETAR Metro New York (SIMNY) (Dianne Nersesian)

Our chapter has been in existence since 1997. We serve interculturalists from New York City and the surrounding metro area. Two years ago

we made the decision to offer 5 annual events as part of membership.

Our 5 events in 2005 included:

- 1) "The Impact of Immigration at the Work Place" with guest speakers from the International Institute in New Jersey
- 2) "An Evening of Art and Culture" at the Austrian Cultural Forum
- 3) "Destination India: Intercultural Opportunities and Challenges" where three panelists presented their viewpoints about working in India and with Indians
- 4) "Leadership Across Cultures" which was a two-day professional workshop with four guest speakers addressing global leadership and multi-cultural team building
- 5) A Holiday Networking event and announcement of the 2006 Metro NYC SIETAR board which will be held on December 6, 2005

Our membership grew from 27 to 40 members in 2005. We have members from Japan, Italy, Germany, the UK and the USA. In addition to members working in the traditional intercultural arena, we have welcomed some new members from the major consulting firms and the coaching field.

Our board served as hosts and hostesses at the opening reception of the SUSA conference in Jersey City and we had a blast wearing Lady Liberty hats and handing out programs!

We have enhanced our Web site (www.sietarnewyork.org) this year by adding program content and photos. We are considering using Run My Club next year to help make our site user-friendlier and are looking to source sponsors for the new Web site.

I have been on the SIETAR board for two years. In 2004 I served as the programming director and this year as president. I anticipate being voted in as president for 2006, with the aim to groom new leadership for 2007.

It's been a year of growth for me personally and professionally, and serving on the SIETAR board has certainly contributed to that growth.

The rest of the board includes Rory Hayden as our treasurer, Louis Lima and Karen Eng as co-directors of programming, and Lourdes Tango as membership director. We have had a lot of fun working together this year!

SIETAR Portland

(Susanne Taylor)

We are loosely made up of a core group of about 10 people and growing. We do not require dues or have an official governing body, just a loose group of folks who share resources and chat via an on-line group. We meet once a month, on the second Thursday with a loose agenda. ((I like to call it "organic.") I coordinate and moderate the group, but we meet at Peggy's house, so she is the host.

At our latest gathering there was a wonderful turn-out of returning folks, new folks, and even a special guest from the national SIETAR ranks. (Total attendance was about 15, which is big for us!) Peggy and Lew's house was, as always, warm and inviting.

After enjoying a wide variety of dishes and treats, we sat down to a recap of the conference. Those who were able to attend mentioned the amazing view from the hotel, the delicious lunches, and some of the interesting topics they were able to explore. Those included the comparison of the DMIS model with various Race and Identity models, Knowledge Management, Virtual experiential games, and the consideration of how space impacts and influences intercultural interaction. (Just to name a few.)

As we often do, the group veered off into a very interesting discussion of how the idea of "virtual" interaction may or may not replace personal interaction and the cultural insight and learning that comes from physically meeting. Then, we also branched off into a discussion of how a particular study mentioned (on NPR) that children who do not meet or follow their mother's gaze when she speaks to them may not show an ability to quickly acquire language. This was seen as a very ethnocentric study, not considering so many other cultures who teach their children at an early age to not make direct eye contact.

Our evening wrapped up with a wonderful presentation from Stephanie Pollack, who is one of the core team members organizing The Scholar Ship. (<http://www.thescholarship.org>) As their website states, "The Scholar Ship is a semester-long academic programme aboard a dedicated cruise ship that traverses the globe on an itinerary that brings the world to you. Our

undergraduate and postgraduate programmes bring students and staff from around the world together to form a transnational learning community." WHAT Interculturalist could refuse THAT invitation?! They are still recruiting the core group to help launch the first transnational voyage, so do check their website listed above. By the end of the evening, I think everyone in the room was ready to swab decks and make beds for a chance to experience this voyage. To contact Stephanie directly, you are welcome to email her at: spollack@thescholarship.org.

SIETAR DC

From Alisia Kachmar SIETAR-DC, Executive Coordinator

Over the past couple of months SIETAR DC has been updating and adding content to the SIETAR-DC website www.sietardc.org.

In addition SIETAR DC hosts a listserv, which has predominantly been a source for job announcements and meeting announcements. Occasionally, individuals have posted requests for information but overall it has been a venue for sharing announcements.

For the past few years we have not been collecting dues and all members of the list serve have received membership benefits without having to pay. In order to keep the organization growing the Executive and Advisory Committees of SIETAR-DC have decided that it's time to start collecting dues again.

There are several benefits to becoming a member of our organization. One is the camaraderie and networking of our members. Another is the professional development that is offered by our meetings and the opportunity to stay current in the field. Finally, many of us feel energized by being around people who are similarly committed to developing appreciation of different cultures. Below is a list of benefits:

- job announcements
- monthly meetings
- a monthly newsletter filled with events and activities in the DC metro area
- networking events

- opportunities to meet people in a variety of fields (of interest to our members)
- an incredible website containing lists of resources - books, movies, sites, higher ed programs, organizations, institutes, etc.

Starting on January 1st, 2006 the listserv will be limited to meeting announcements and new website posting updates. For example – when we have a new job announcement to share with SIETAR-DC members, we will post it on the website and will then send an email to the Yahoo Group stating that a new posting has been added to the website. Members will be able to log on and gain access to the members-only section of the website.

People interested in joining can go to www.sietardc.org and click on 'Join SIETAR-DC'.

Please contact SIETAR-DC with any questions or feedback - sietardc@gmail.com.

SIETAR Baltimore

From Adriana Medina-López-Portillo

The local chapter of SIETAR in Baltimore sponsored two events in November along with the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics and the Intercultural Communication Master's program and the Language, Literacy and Culture doctoral program, University of Maryland Baltimore County. The first one was held on November 15. The speaker was Gilles Asselin who came from New Jersey to talk to us about a variety of topics: from what is it like to be a professional in the intercultural communication field to creating and operating a company to French and US values. At the end of the session he facilitated an exercise to give the participants a feel for what he may do in any given session.

The second meeting was during the same week, on November 17. Again, this was organized in cooperation with the departments and programs mentioned above. The meeting was an informal discussion of the situation in France.

5. Announcements

SUSA News gets a new Editor!

The new Newsletter Editor is Monica Francois Marcel. As outgoing editor, I'd like to say that I think Monica will do a super job and I am so pleased to be handing off to someone I know cares about doing a good job. The plan as of now is for Monica to do the next newsletter. To contact her for submissions, email her at: mfrancois@languageandculture.com.

6. Obituary

In Remembrance of Barbara Steinwachs:

Some people are larger than life; Barbara was one of those. Some people with crusty exteriors have warm, loving interiors; Barbara was one of those. Some people ask, what is in it for me? Barbara was not one of those. She always said, how can I help?

Barbara was perhaps best known for her work with simulation games. She was one of the first to use BaFa BaFa when she was with the Extension Program at the University of Michigan. She conducted, critiqued, designed, and redesigned a variety of experiential activities including many simulation games. Countless trainers—from the neophytes to old timers—went to her for advice. Her knowledge came from years of experience and serious thought about what learning is and how best to facilitate it. She used to say that participants would learn what they wanted or needed to learn so her goal was always to start there and lead them gently but firmly to new learning.

Not afraid of risks, she would try new games with aplomb and design new ways of using both old favorites and newer games. Perhaps her years as a nun helped her develop her great faith in the power of simulation games. When game artifacts were not available, she was known to raid the supply closet for paper clips, erasers, and anything else that would lend itself to an impromptu run of BaFa BaFa.

Barbara was curious about so many things and she acted on her curiosity. When she and her husband Art Bechhoefer moved from Washington, DC to their home, *risingmoon*, on the shores of Keuka Lake in upstate New York, Art bought her a telescope. Barbara set about learning about the stars she could see so clearly through the telescope set up on their dock. Barbara loved nature and she often introduced herself to game participants by telling them of the things she would see on her daily walks in the woods near her home. Art wrote that Barbara said “dying is just part of living.” That speaks eloquently of her belief in the natural world.

Barbara always seemed to be going the extra mile. When she became friends with Pierre Corbeil, she began to learn French so she could engage his wife, who spoke no English, in conversation. She did not need to learn to speak French because Pierre could easily translate, but she wanted to be able to communicate directly.

Barbara was a member of SIETAR International and SIETAR USA. She was on the Board of Directors for NASAGA (the North American Simulation and Gaming Association) for decades and chaired a NASAGA conference in Washington, DC, in the 1980s. She opened the conference with one of her signature scavenger hunts—her first. She attended both SIETAR and NASAGA conferences for many years, chairing sessions, designing pre-conference workshops, and organizing the old timers to sit around a “campfire” and reminisce. She was also supportive of the *Simulation & Gaming Journal* where she was the simulation/game review editor for many years.

Politics ran a close second to simulation games in her life. She was Chair of the Democratic Committee for Yates County, the rural community where she lived. Upstate New York is a bastion of conservative Republicans but this daunted Barbara not at all. She loved the challenge and worked hard to get the Democratic candidates elected. Even though most of those candidates were defeated year after year, she fought on. Her battle with cancer was not to be won, but she gave it a good fight, which gave her quite a few good years. In November, as her strength faded and the hours were difficult to get through, she held on to hear the victorious election results (every one of the Democratic candidates won!) and was finally ready to move on.

Barbara will be remembered by those of us in the profession who knew her and the many, many participants who were lucky enough to experience a game run by one of the best.

7.How to Reach Us

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