

*Jan Herrera*  
(1982-84)

Serving as President of CCFLT was a great honor, challenge, and a BLAST! As a CCFLT Board member, you work really hard to do a good job; as President-Elect, you work really, really hard to prepare to do a great job; as President, you work as hard as you can imagine because it is so important to have things go at least as well as the preceding year (hopefully, so much better, because, after all, it's your year), and then the following years you relax and proudly watch the organization forge ahead successfully. It is the best thing to be a past president because the current board members have been nice enough, so far, to continue to treat you to lovely parties, one of which is a delicious traditional potluck, but you luck out and don't even have to bring a pot, and you leave with a special gift! WOW! Wouldn't we all be willing to be presidents of things if all groups would treat us so nicely? Seriously though, this one example reflects what is so special about CCFLT. Beyond the fact that it is one of the premier state professional organizations in the nation, and it represents the interests of our profession superbly at the regional and national level with intelligence and style, it is an organization that seeks, nurtures, and honors the excellence in all of us language teachers! The opportunities for professional leadership, development, and service are meaningful and rewarding. The collective efforts of CCFLT make a difference for us as professionals and most importantly, for our students! The CCFLT tradition of supporting, advocating, and embracing the finest in language teaching and learning will lead our profession into the next 50 years with purpose, class, and fun!

The president often gets called upon to do things at the last minute and needs to be an adept trouble-shooter. One year, at the Spring Conference, we suddenly needed a presider to host a session. I said that I would be glad to do it, but please imagine my dilemma when, after graciously introducing the presenter and taking my seat in the one and only front row of a semi-circle of about ten participants, it became evident that the entire one hour program was being delivered in a language that I didn't understand. There was no polite way of leaving so I nodded, and laughed, and tried to "demonstrate comprehension with culturally appropriate body language" throughout the presentation.

There are lots of memories about our years at the Broadmoor. It was always fun to impress other teachers and friends with the fact that, "Why, yes, of course I'm going to the Broadmoor, (sigh), again." All were impressed except the English teachers who also went there and it seemed like their speakers were bigger and better! (Remember one year they had John Hausman, during "Paper Chase" fame?) Now, what we didn't tell them was that we would be sleeping maximum capacity allowed (not by the hotel, nor the fire

code, but by floor space!), and that we were hoping to get enough hors d'oeuvres at the sponsored wine and cheese reception that we wouldn't need to buy our own dinner. It was fun to find time to stroll through those fancy shops around the hotel and browse. Would you believe that one year I actually bought something? There was a shoe sale at the Papagallo's shop and I stopped in after the wine and cheese reception. Unfortunately, the shoes never felt the same after that night. Who could forget the fun we had turning the Broadmoor into "our" hotel at least for a few nights. Do you suppose they have many other groups check in with garbage bags (full of treasured props for a presentation)? And their staff is probably still talking about the night of our Mardi Gras costume party. Joe Harris added prestige to the place as he impressed his elevator co-riders as being a rich oil sheik from the Middle East. Michael Nettleton "blew them away" in his dragon ensemble, and Joan Otoupalik topped them all when she glided through the lobby as Santa Lucia and received the comment from a businessman, "Nice hat!" People are still marveling about what Toni Theisen was and why. (A radish? Really?) That night was my first opportunity to meet Marie-Jo Hoffman as I remember being impressed that all of the high-energy things that I had heard about her teaching could be done by such an elderly woman! (Her costume was very good, I was sure that she was really old. She'll probably never look that old even when she really is.)

When I look back on my early years, I realize that destiny determined that I would have to be professionally involved. I had the incredible opportunity to learn foreign language methods from Arno Preller at CSU. He gave us a test where we had to identify the alphabet soup of all of the professional organizations that were available to us (AAT this, ATCFL that, CCFLT..., etc.! Then I had the privilege to student teach with Sam Butler who said it was a state law to attend the CCFLT conference, and it just happened to be held at (you guessed it) UNC, and hosted by (you guessed it) Lynn Sandstedt. You just try eating cocktail weenies with those two without getting the message that you are supposed to get involved. Then there were other teachers to inspire each other. I sat next to this one French teacher at a CSU workshop and when sharing ideas it came out that, yes, believe it or not, this teacher produced, directed, costumed, etc. a French musical at her junior high!!! Amazing! (Yes, Barb Johnson!) But, I must admit I did feel pretty cool when it came around to being my turn and I told about the 20 passenger airplane we had created in my classroom.

Actually, we foreign/world/second/non-English/global/target language teachers really do some incredible things when you think about it. After we have been around ourselves we forget how bizarre/unique/crazy we are. But when you find yourself telling other little league fans what you're up to they give you this look like, "You have got to be kidding me..." For example, pretend you're a normal person and witness this conversation:

*"Yeah, I don't have to go to school tomorrow. I have the day off. We're taking 100 students to the mountains to imagine we're in another country. Uh huh, the school bus is our airplane and we all have passports and we cover all of the English signs at the camp with the same signs in the target language, and we have Olympics, and we cook 'authentic foreign' foods, and we do crafts, folk dance, skits, bedtime stories, and give stars, and it's really fun! See you Monday!"*

And you know it's time to "GET A LIFE!" when:

- upon hearing that it's a snow day you're thrilled because you can spend the day grading papers;
- you have red ink marks on your pillow case;
- you get your credit card bill from your great vacation abroad and you realize that you spent more money on materials for your classes than you did on fine dining;
- your idea of a summer off is revising your curriculum and reorganizing your files!

Well, we do it all because we love our languages and we love to share them with our students. Let's keep on helping each other to do our best for our students who are the future of our global, interrelated, multicultural, and diverse community. Thank you to CCFLT for leading the way!