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Newsletter of the
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Lernu.net: New Interlingual Technology And A Gateway To Esperanto

My recent exposure to the language and culture of Esperanto comes courtesy of Lernu.net, a free, online portal to the world of Esperanto. In my first encounter with Lernu, I quickly became enamored of its potential as a language learning resource. As I worked my way through its various sections, I marveled at my level of engagement with the system. After finishing my first learning session, I realized, upon reflection, that Esperanto, itself, is something of a marvel.

As a casual student of but a few languages, I have found my attention, at times, sorely challenged by the psychological gulf that can exist between the learner and the often flat, featureless landscape of print resources, or quickly arrested by clear mismatches of language ability in face-to-face classrooms. In Lernu.net, one is removed from the hazards of such paths and is placed, instead, in a rich, interactive environment full of sights and sounds that can be explored at one's own pace.

Within this environment also resides a diverse, global community of tutors and fellow language learners of all levels. Using Lernu's 'built-in' text messaging system, one is free to interact with this community as one chooses. This is the standout feature of Lernu: one is free to proceed through the learning modules of one's choice at a pace suited to one's ability and/or schedule.

The Lernu portal has five major information sections as well as a multi-lingual dictionary and the instant messenger access to an online Esperanto community. The Lernu site can also be translated into thirteen (and counting) world languages. Individuals from a growing number of countries around the world can access Lernu in their native language and proceed through its self-paced learning programs.

In the first information section, called "lernu!", one has access to a personalized home page that displays a user's profile as well as any messages that have been sent from personal tutors or members of the community. It will also, soon, provide a log of words learned and mastered. In addition, one can see who is currently logged on at a given time or access a contact list of the site's total membership. From this section, one can also access 'technical help' pages and other pages providing information about Lernu.net in general.

The next section of the site is called "Intro." Here, one can access several interesting and easy-to-digest pages on the background, history and culture of Esperanto as well as pages devoted to an overview of the language itself. A compendium of 'useful phrases' is also provided.

The third information section contains Lernu's three interactive learning modules, or courses. The beginner course, "Ana Pana," introduces basic aspects of the language in a very clear, step-wise fashion. Students are introduced to a character called "Ana" and learn about different aspects of her life. Within each of the course's modules, students are exposed to vocabulary and grammar structures of increasing complexity. They can

"As I worked my way
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engagement."

also read along with hyperlinked audio passages that help to model correct pronunciation. At the end of each of the modules, students are given written exercises to complete and send to course tutors for feedback. The second, intermediate-level course is called "Jen nia IJK." It is, essentially, a story consisting of a number of progressively more difficult chapters that introduce new vocabulary and grammar structures. As in Ana Pana, students also have an opportunity to complete a variety of learning exercises.

Continued over....

Esperantic Studies Foundation: Annual Report 2002

SUMMARY

Over the past year, the Esperantic Studies Foundation continued to expand its support for Internet-based educational projects, including an interactive, multilingual environment for learning Esperanto which went on line shortly before year's end. New homes were found for the North American Summer Esperanto Institute, and for the Foundation's administration. The relaunch of its newsletter *Esperantic Studies* in new electronic and print formats marked the first stage of an effort to make ESF and its research agenda more widely known in the academic community.

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Lernu.net con't

The final, advanced-level course in Lernu is called "Gerda Malaperis!" It, too, is structured as a story that students work their way through, ideally with the assistance of an Esperanto teacher or tutor.

In the fourth section, called "Tools," students can access a detailed overview of Esperanto grammar. They may also test their understanding and retention of new words with a "flash cards" program. There is also an interactive Q&A page in this section. The "Library" is the final information section in the Lernu.net site. Here, one has access to stories for a variety of levels in text or audio

formats; one can listen to diverse selections of Esperanto music. There are even links to short films using Esperanto as the spoken language. Lernu is truly a rich learning and cultural environment.

The Lernu.net site can be accessed with most web browsers, including Internet Explorer 5 or higher or Netscape 6 or higher. To use some of its interactive features, such as instant messenger or flashcards, one will need to download free Java 1.3 software. The site is designed for use with a 56K

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ADMINISTRATION

The gradual renewal of the Board of Directors continued with the retirement of long-time Secretary (and recent Treasurer) Jim Lieberman in May. One of the founding members of ESF, Dr. Lieberman provided essential administrative continuity over many years, as well as contributing to the recent expansion of the Foundation's programs. The position of Secretary was assumed by new Board member Ian Richmond, a professor of French language and literature at Université Sainte-Anne in Nova Scotia. Board membership was increased to six by the addition of Mark Fettes, who had worked part-time as ESF's Executive Director prior to his appointment to a faculty position in Education at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia. Dr. Fettes took over the job of Treasurer. Other Board positions remained unchanged, including those of President (Humphrey Tonkin), Vice-Presidents (David Jordan, Jonathan Pool) and Member at Large (Grant Goodall).

The retrenchment of stock markets in 2002 had a significant impact on the Foundation's investment portfolio, which was valued at \$2.7 million at year's end. An Investment Strategy Committee consisting of Tonkin, Pool and Fettes began a wide-ranging review of available investment options, later broadened to include a review of ESF's charitable purposes. New decisions in this area are expected in 2003.

EDUCATION

Summer Esperanto Institute (NASK)

After 32 years in San Francisco, the Nord-Amerika Somera Kursaro (NASK), an intensive three-week, three-credit program in Esperanto, was hosted for the first time by the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. NASK administrator Ellen Eddy worked closely with SIT's Language and Culture Center to design and publicize the program, taught by instructors Ilona Koutny (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland), Aleksandr Melnikov (University of Rostov, Russia) and Roberto

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Upcoming Events

May 20-24

CALICO (Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium)

A demonstration of Lernu.net will be given on May 22, 6:30-9:30pm. Where: Ottawa, Canada. For more information see: www.calico.org

June 15-18

UNESCO 2003 Conference

Focus: Interkultura Edukado
Featured presentation: "Teoriaj rezultoj kaj praktikaj spertoj de distribuita interkultura retlernejo."

A report on a 3 year research project using Esperanto as a bridge language. Where: Jyväskylä, Finland. For more information see: www.jyu.fi/ktl/unesco2003/conference.htm

June 25 – August 8

International Summer University Program

Where: Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. The Language Faculty of the Copenhagen Business School will offer the following courses:

- World English and Language Rights
- Europe in Translation: People and Machines Solving Intercultural Language Problems

For more information, see: www.cbs.dk/intoff/summer/

July 7-25

NASK (Nord-Amerika Somera Kursaro)

Three levels of Esperanto instruction (Post-basic, Intermediate, Advanced) will be offered at this year's North American Summer Esperanto Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. See the announcement in this newsletter for more information.

August 2-3

Symposium On Communication Across Cultural Boundaries – SIK 2003

Organized by the Academy of Esperanto and Drs. S. Allén and S.G. Malmgren with the support of the Swedish Academy of Sciences. Where: University of Gothenburg, Sweden. For more information see: www.math.uu.se/~kiselman/sik2003en.html

September 3-6

EUROCALL

Featured presentation: An overview of Lernu.net. Where: Limerick, Ireland. For more information see: www.hull.ac.uk/cti/eurocall/



Annual Report con't

Resende (University of Natal, Brazil). While attendance was smaller than in previous years, the new venue received enthusiastic reviews and will be repeated in 2003.

Pasporto Video Course

Following an initial grant in the previous year, ESF provided an additional \$38,000 towards the completion of an international 15-lesson video course entitled *Esperanto, Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo*. Currently available on VHS in North American and European formats, the series is expected to appear on DVD in 2003. ESF also provided support towards a training video for teachers interested in using the course in classroom settings.

Edukado.net: A Resource for Esperanto Teachers

Initiated by ESF in 2001, the web pages at <http://www.edukado.net/> were further expanded by an international team of programmers and educators to include an interactive catalogue of over 130 published materials for teaching Esperanto, a databank of downloadable materials contributed by participating teachers, a noticeboard and a discussion forum. Over 10,000 visits were recorded over the course of the year. The site continues to be updated and expanded by Katalin Kovats, a Hungarian expert in language teaching and teacher training.

Lernu.net: A Resource for Esperanto Learners

In March, 2002, ESF convened a meeting of web designers, programmers and experienced Esperanto teachers in Davis, California, in conjunction with the annual conference of the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO). Drawing on ideas and demonstrations at the conference and on work already accomplished under the aegis of ESF, the group drew up a plan for a multilingual, interactive, website for learning Esperanto.

Berkeley Student Program

ESF's program of support for a student-taught Esperanto course at the University of California at Berkeley continued into its fourth year. To the bilingual course teachers, Lana Shlafer and Stelet Mina Kim, was added a third native Esperanto speaker, Alex Shlafer, who worked to expand out-of-class activities. ESF provides funds for teaching materials and a modest scholarship for the teachers.

INTERLINGUISTIC RESEARCH

Interlingual Research Grant

A major research project by Russian researcher Aleksandr Melnikov, on the ways in which the culture of Esperanto's community of speakers is

reflected in the lexicon, phraseology and stylistics of the language, approached completion late in the year. A multi-volume Russian-language publication is foreseen, followed by a condensed Esperanto version. No new Interlingual Research Grants were awarded in 2002.

Esperanto Corpus Project

In response to the widely expressed need for a large research corpus of Esperanto texts, ESF contracted with Swedish programmer Bertil Wennergren, a member of the Esperanto Academy. By the end of the year a trial corpus of one million words had been produced, following the guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). The initial phase of the project is expected to yield a corpus of three to five million words, which ESF will make available to researchers on request.

Conference Presentations

ESF initiated and supported a panel presentation at the 2002 conference of the International Communication Association, held in Seoul in July. The panel brought together university scholars from China, Korea and Japan to discuss Esperanto's contribution to further intercultural dialogue in East Asia. A short monograph is planned on the basis of the presentations.

ESF also provided funding for its former intern, Swedish student Jennifer Palmgren, to give a paper on her research on the roles of Esperanto, Swahili and English as lingua francas in Tanzania to a conference on the role of Swahili in East Africa.

By Mark Fettes (mfettes@esperantic.org)

Lernu.net con't

dial-up connection; however, it is best experienced with a high speed connection. I found some of the audio features to be hit-and-miss during my first run through Ana Pana. I was only able to hear the audio features about 50% of the time. It is possible that this technical difficulty may owe more to the quirks of my browser, than the course or Lernu itself. Finally, Lernu's user-interface is well designed. It is clean and employs a consistent template for every page. Site navigation is also clearly and consistently situated and is very user-friendly.

Overall, the team responsible for developing Lernu.net has produced a pedagogical and technological marvel. In the near future, it will be interesting to see what research will say about this and other similar language learning technologies.

By Jason M. Clark (jclark@esperantic.org)

New Releases

Books

Maskerado: Dancing Around Death In Nazi Hungary.

Author: Tivador Soros, 2000
Published: London: Canongate.
Languages: Esperanto, English, Russian, Turkish, Hungarian, German. Editor: H. Tonkin
ISBN: 1841950629

Translated from the original Esperanto by Dr. Humphrey Tonkin, Maskerado is a powerful, autobiographical account of a Jewish family's efforts to survive the Nazi occupation of Hungary.

Plansprachen und Ihre Gemeinschaften [Planned Languages and Their Communities].

Editor: Detlev Blanke, 2002
Published: Gesellschaft für Interlinguistik. Languages: German. ISSN 1432-3567

A diverse collection of academic papers covering topics ranging from interlinguistics, Esperanto and the planned language movement, to comic book literature and the status of Klingon.

Kontrasztív Szemantikai Kutatások [Explorations in Contrastive Semantics].

Editor: Gecső Tamás, 2001

A collection of academic papers from the conference of the same name held in Budapest in 2001. Articles focus on comparing aspects of Esperanto with other planned and European languages.

English-Only Europe? Challenging Language Policy.

Author: Robert Phillipson, 2003
Published: New York: Routledge.
ISBN: 0415288061

Reviews the historical background of linguistic diversity in Europe and explores how the advance of English is impacting the economy, science, culture, education and politics.

Mixed Artificial Languages

Author: Alan Libert, 2003
Published: Lincom GmbH ISBN: 3895868442

A technical review of mixed, artificial languages. Includes discussions on the following languages: Volapük, the Blue Language, Giło, pan-kel and Vela.



NASK 2002: Immersion in Esperanto

NASK (Nord-Ameriko Somera Kursaro de Esperanto), or the North American Summer Esperanto Institute, took place on the campus of the School for International Training near Brattleboro, Vermont from July 8 through July 26, 2002.

Below are some comments from participants in the three week program:

"We found the milieu at SIT (birthplace of The Experiment in International Living) particularly warm and supportive. The campus, on wooded hills outside the city, seemed more like an international summer camp than the renowned post-graduate institution that it is.

Many of the other 250 students on the campus, enrolled in various master's programs all related to teaching and working in intercultural environments, came from overseas. This provided both cultural diversity and a common interest in languages and culture."

Bill Maxey

It was normal and common to easily cross language barriers, while still respecting each others' linguistic and cultural difference.

"The theme for NASK for the year 2002 was Esperanto culture. If it existed, we wanted to experience it! Our three instructors came directly from Poland, Russia and Brazil, but after the first few days of class, because of their being professional Esperantists, their country of origin seemed very unimportant to us. Fellow students came from Britain, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Ghana, Poland and France as well as from the United States, but although we learned to appreciate our individual cultural differences, the common bond of understanding and identity that we all had was Esperanto. Because of Esperanto, it was normal and

common to easily cross language barriers, while still respecting each others' linguistic and cultural difference. In this way, Esperanto gave us a powerful uplifting feeling that everyone should have the privilege to experience."

Werner Moeller



North American Summer Esperanto Institute / Nord-Amerika Somera Kursaro

July 7 – July 25, 2003

School for International Training (SIT), Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

Three levels of instruction: post-basic • intermediate • advanced

Three international instructors:

- Spomenka Stimec (Croatia), Esperanto author, teacher, cultural organizer
- Paul Gubbins, Ph.D. (England), Esperanto teacher and author of books, plays and the video series "Esperanto - Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo"
- Lee Miller (USA), teacher of Esperanto and American Sign Language interpreter

3 College Credits are available

Course fees: \$950 USD

Scholarships are available.

Housing (inc. 3 meals per/day):

\$660 Dbl. / \$780 Single

Contact: Ellen Eddy (eddyellen@aol.com)

www.esperanto.org/nask/

www.sit.edu/esperanto

Interlingual Links

Around the Globe

Esperantic Studies Foundation

www.esperantic.org

Lernu.net

www.lernu.net

Edukado.net

www.edukado.net

Universala Esperanto-Asocio

www.uea.org

Online Esperanto Course (Kurso de Esperanto)

www.cursoedesperanto.com.br/

Esperanto Radio - China

<http://esperanto.cri.com.cn/>

Esperanto Radio - Poland

www.wrn.org/listeners/stations/stat ion.php?StationID=16

Send us your links of interesting Interlinguistic sites throughout the world and we will publish them in future issues.

We are also interested in receiving information about new books, articles, courses or other media relevant to research on Esperanto and Interlinguistics.

All contributions and reactions to the newsletter are welcome at newsletter@esperantic.com

Previous editions of Esperantic Studies are now available online at www.esperantic.org

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