

[Submitted by Sarah Nelson (snelson@uidaho.edu), 3/19/11, for posting on IATLC web site, French page]

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Greetings, Idaho French Teachers!

Support for education at all levels is being cut, and demands on teachers are rising. Research continues to show that students' foreign language study has positive effects on their performance across multiple disciplines, and yet languages are often treated by administrators, legislators, or the public as nonessential fields of study. It can start to wear on you after a while!

The best antidote to this kind of discouragement is to reconnect with our motivations for joining this profession in the first place, and with the other people around us who share the same motivations. We ourselves have experienced the excitement and joy of discovering very different cultures from our own and learning to communicate within them, and we have seen our students do that, too. We understand the broad and deep impact the study of languages can have on a person's life. In order to keep these core convictions in focus, and also in order to keep adding to our stock of knowledge and teaching ideas, it is important for us to get together regularly and collaborate.

We Idaho French teachers have two excellent opportunities to gather in the next six months:

- **IATLC French Retreat at McCall Outdoor Science School, June 24-26, 2011**
Please watch for email and paper mail information on this weekend retreat, or click **here**. [link to 2011 McCall French retreat info & registration.doc]
There is space for up to 20 participants; please register by **April 20, 2011**.
- **IATLC annual fall conference, Caldwell High School, October 6-7, 2011**
 - Please decide right now to attend the 2011 meeting of the IATLC and make it part of your plans.
 - Please find another language teacher who has yet to discover the benefits of this meeting, and get that teacher to come, too.
 - Please think of the colleagues you admire and make a nomination for this year's Teacher of the Year.
 - And finally, please consider presenting a session at this year's meeting. The discussions that follow presentations are some of the best ways for the state's French teachers to connect and learn from each other, so we try to have French sessions spread throughout the two-day schedule. Have you got an effective way of teaching a grammar point? an activity that your students really love? a project that you've conducted? a professional development experience that you think other teachers would like to try, too? Each of us has a number of things that we could present in order to get the whole group talking. Please take a minute and figure out what you might be able to bring to the rest of us this year, and then email me (snelson@uidaho.edu) or submit a presentation proposal form!

While it represents a bigger commitment of time and money, it can also be enormously beneficial both to your professional knowledge and your enthusiasm level to attend the conferences of the national organizations:

- Upcoming American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) annual meetings:
 - 2011: Montréal, July 6-9
 - 2012: Chicago, July 5-8Information at www.frenchteachers.org.

- Upcoming American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) annual meetings:
 - 2011: Denver, November 18-20
 - 2012: Philadelphia, November 16-18Information at www.actfl.org.

In order to help keep language & culture education--and specifically, French education--strong, we need to be united, and we need to be visible. You can help those efforts by maintaining your membership in key professional organizations, especially the AATF. The AATF offers a rich trove of resources and scholarship support for professional development, and it also serves as a strong voice of advocacy for French education nationally. Our chapter's numbers have dwindled dramatically over recent years, and we need to build them back up and show we're still here! To join or renew your membership, please go to the AATF web site: www.frenchteachers.org.

Au plaisir de vous voir nombreux en octobre à Caldwell . . . vive le français et vive l'IATLC!

Sarah Nelson
Associate Professor of French, University of Idaho
Chapter President, AATF/French Section Leader, IATLC (2009-2011)
snelson@uidaho.edu