

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE 1980 - 2020

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

As we celebrate another end of a school year, difficult as it was, it is our hope that everyone is healthy and safe and has successfully endured through it all. Being a recently retired teacher, I can only imagine the strength that it took to adapt to an online teaching format with little or no notice. So many adjustments were required to insure students continued learning the necessary skills for acquiring language. Kudos to all!

LILT, too, had to readjust and reschedule many events and opportunities that we usually offer and still continue to provide support to our membership. We were able to successful-

ly offer one Professional Development Workshop, *The Many Ways to Empower NLA Students Through La Casa en Mango Street*, before the pandemic hit.

Both the workshop and presenter, Adriana Devers, who conducted the workshop in Spanish, received positive reviews by all who attended.

Regrettably, our Poster Contest has been postponed due to the closing of school and the inability of many students to submit their posters to their teachers. We have addressed these concerns and will be reorganizing the collection and judging of all of the entries. If you have any questions regarding the contest please contact: pluzzi@liltfl.org.





Message from the Editor

Happy Summer!

Welcome summer! I hope you are and your families are well and safe. I would like to extend my condolences to those who have lost loved ones during this crisis. These past few months have most certainly tested our resolve.

*Rest is not
idleness, and
to lie
sometimes on
the grass on
a summer day
listening to
the murmur
of water,
or watching
the clouds
float across
the sky, is
hardly a
waste of time.*

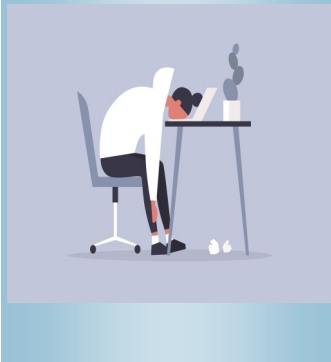
John Lubbock

To be sure we are eager to step away from remote learning and enjoy some well deserved vacation time, even if it becomes a staycation. Many of us are drained from the battle of the google and zoom and trying to translate pass/fail grades to an appropriate measure of student progress. Sad that we were unable to celebrate the many important milestones and rites of passage for our students and colleagues. In the end, the mental health of our students and their academic achievements always remain our top priority, but it does take its toll. Summer could not come fast enough! Let's take this time to refresh, to renew and let's hope for a smooth 'unpausing' as we 'reimagine' once again our craft.

In this issue you will notice a new feature, Member Spotlight. In an effort to recognize your contributions to our noble profession, each issue will highlight a LILT member, randomly selected, to showcase. I also welcome your suggestions and contributions to the newsletter. Please send your article, book review, successful lesson for consideration to me at csosa@liltfl.org. I would love to share it!

Wishing you all a healthy, relaxing summer!

Cheryl Sosa
Editor





LILT 2020 Virtual Conference
Explore A Language: The World Needs You!

We are excited to announce a new format for our Annual Conference:
The conference will be 100% online!

Although disappointed that we will be unable to see everyone, we are sure that you will still get the experience of an in-person event.

There will be opportunities for social networking with colleagues,
visiting virtual vendor booths, chatting with
presenters and much more!

CTLE credit will be given for those who attend.

More details will follow soon. Stay tuned!

Do you have an idea for a workshop or know someone who would be
interested in presenting?

Proposals are submitted online. Link is on our website: www.liltfl.org



Deadline: September 1

Questions?

Contact: ddinatale@liltfl.org or jorlando@liltfl.org

Hope to see you online!

"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."

— Oscar Wilde



BOOK REVIEW

Bad Times, Good People

By Walter Wolff

This is the story of Walter Wolff, a German Jew who lived during the Holocaust in Germany and Italy.

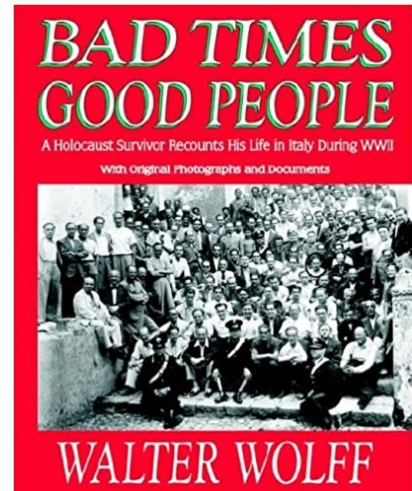
It follows him from his childhood to the liberation in 1945.

His account is different from other Holocaust stories because it is told from a unique perspective. He and his family, as well as many Jews, Italians and non-Italians survived in Italy due to the willingness of ordinary Italians to protect them while risking their own lives.

Walter's life and story gives another dimension to the Holocaust saga which is barely known to the outside world. It is a story worth knowing as it describes how ordinary people acted with goodness and kindness towards strangers at a time when the world was dealing with the worst evil ever depicted in modern history.

This is a compelling story and a must read for old and young alike!

Submitted by member Doris Davis





The Traveling Teacher

Cuba, ¿Qué Bolá?



All of us who travel know that the experience is usually an invitation to challenge ourselves, to change our perspective about our lives, and to reassess meaning. We often return from these experiences with personal realizations, and the process of recounting our travel stories is as much about sharing those realizations as sharing the sense of beauty or interest in the place visited. (Joe Lambert, Center for Digital Storytelling , Berkley, California. 2019)

On Friday the 13th , when we began ‘the pause’ I was hopeful this would be a short homestay, welcoming a little time to clean a closet or read a book while on lock down, until I walked into the grocery store. I walked into Stop and Shop with my usual list, not really thinking twice, only to be slammed with a flashback to a Cuban supermarket.

Cuba had always been like a siren calling for me. Seeing Cuba had been a dream for me since childhood. Listening to my grandparents talk about where they grew up, the music, food, poetry and of course a Cuba libre, which as a child I had no idea of what the adults in the room really meant by that. I was surrounded by the music of Ernesto Lecuona, Beny Moré and Celia Cruz and the smells of café con leche, frijoles negros, yuca and lechón and enough sugar to put even the most healthy person into a diabetic coma. Both of my great grandparents were cigar rollers who migrated back and forth from Cuba to Tampa for work, leaving their children in Matanzas. Eventually they emigrated to raise their family. Mi gente, campesinos, came pre-revolution, so when the Revolution toppled the Batista government my grandparents had already achieved their American Dream of owning a house, a business, learning broken English and contributing a swatch to this American quilt. They returned to Cuba regularly for vacation but had no intention of returning permanently. The United States was now their home.

Once Castro inserted himself, flocks of refugees rotated in and out of my grandparents' house. There was always a tito, tato, lola or someone dropping in, staying a few nights, some a tad longer. Doctors and judges who were working as custodians or carpenters by day, going to school at night. Listening to their stories is where my interest in politics, history and learning Spanish germinated. It wasn't until I was older that I began to really understand the complexity of Cuba.

My husband has a different story. The 'Revolution' disrupted his family in an unforgiving way. Coming from a family of what I would call privileged, they lost everything they had spent a life time working for in only a few days. Deciding to leave Cuba was a difficult decision, but given the choice of jail or becoming another member of the diaspora was an unavoidable one. So, like many of the more fortunate families, they left with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Most Cubans believing this to be a temporary move made the pill a little easier to swallow. Sadly, this was not the case.

My first opportunity to travel to Cuba was when it first opened up, but my efforts were unsuccessful due to visa issues. I persisted. I wanted to go with my husband, who swore he wouldn't go back to Cuba until Castro was removed from the planet. Of course his actual words were a tad more colorful. After years of wearing him down, he agreed to go with me only after his parents passed. He felt that returning while Castro was still in place would be a betrayal of their sacrifice. I believed that returning to where he was born might bring him a sense of closure. So, we traveled to Cuba together for the first time in 2015. I traveled twice more to Cuba, each time with different experiences and eyes, pero aun más complicado.

We arrived at the José Martí airport, the 'special' terminal for Americans, the terminal with no air conditioning or clean bathrooms. Coming through security took 4 hours and each bag was x rayed, one by one. Dozens of Miami Cubans bringing in electronics that needed to be declared and for the government to claim their piece of the pie. Once through with our documents, we exchanged money with a special penalty for exchanging dollars. Cuba has two currencies, CUCs (Cuban convertible pesos and Cuban pesos) one for the tourists and one for the citizens. The Cuban peso has almost no value and is worthless to anyone except locals. We loaded onto a bus where we met our tour guide whose first words were 'Welcome to planet Cuba, it's like no other place, es complicado' and off we went to our hotel. The hotel was quite nice, for Cuba considered a luxury hotel, with a pool and bar, a little shop and wifi, very expensive spoty wifi, but wifi none the less. Our tour guide was not permitted to stay in the hotel with us, as that would be affording her an opportunity not available to all other Cubans. So, can't have preference in socialismo, everyone is equal.

Once settled in, we walked a few blocks to the market to get some water and get the lay of the land. As we walked into the market we were stopped by a security guard who wanted to look in our bags and asked to leave them at the door. When I explained that we were tourists and would not be comfortable leaving them with our passports inside, he let us pass. This was a government market, and so could only buy what the government was selling. To my amazement, there was plenty of plain yogurt, water and bread. Not much else. There were aisles and aisles of empty shelves. The few pieces of meat available were so expensive no 'regular' Cuban would be able to afford to buy. I took my phone out to take pictures. I was stopped and told to put the phone away, no pictures. (I always like to use photos in my lessons so the students can see real life markets from different places.) I remember thinking, oh my God, this is terrible! This would never happen at home, the people would never put up with this! Then thinking how lucky we are to live where we have access to just about anything we wanted without having to stand in line! So when quarantine was enacted, I began to flash back to what we saw in Cuba, back to the empty shelves, the institutional racism that the government doesn't want us to see, the tales of the special period, the Russian influence they experienced, the isolation for so many decades, the promise of a growing economy and of course to the lessons we could learn from the resilience of the Cubans and the human spirit.



Cuba is a country of contradictions, truly ‘complicao’, from its dual currency to its interpretation of equity. Without getting too much into politics, it is a country frozen in time, laden with propaganda. A country that is residence to some of the most creative and innovative people on earth. A country that has produced, arguably, some of the best music, poetry, and rum in the world. A country that has fought so staunchly to claim its place at the table, its own voice. A country that claims equality, yet some seemingly more equal than others. A country with the highest literacy rate in the world, but can only read what the government allows them access to, whose leader was successful pitting two super powers against each other and come out standing. A country that is so unblemished with progress that you really do feel that you are stepping into another time period, not just another landscape. A country where doctors are cab drivers and engineers are waiters. A country of incredible innovation where nothing is wasted and everything is repurposed. Most Cuban-Americans yearn for a Cuba they imagine, a Cuba they have never seen, experiencing it only through the memory of their parents or grandparents. So, experiencing this ‘planet’ for the first time for me with a Cuban was a remarkable journey. For some who have returned, the heartbreak was too much to bear, seeing their once pristine life turned into a crumbling decay on the malecón.



Under different administrations Cuba has been accessible to selected Americans, prior to the Obama administration, mostly to those who had living relatives on the island and were returning for family reasons or on a special pre-approved educational experience. There was no embassy in Cuba before the Obama administration since it closed in 1961. Although the blockade has been in place since the sixties, many Cuban families send aid through Mexico, Spain or an-



other third party country that does commerce with Cuba. Money is sent as well creating a profitable black market economy. In fact the ‘crime’ in spending money in Cuba comes from the U.S. end, not the Cuban side. Cubans are happy to take your dollars as long as the Comité does not report you. Although citizens from almost every other country can travel sort of freely about, Americans have restriction where they are permitted to go. Americans must be escorted and have access to only certain places and people, a people to people experience. While Canadians and Italians are sunning themselves with a Cuba libre on the beach, Americans must refrain from such activity (although many take the chance to pass as Canadians.)

On my first trip to Cuba we stayed a week in and around Havana. We had the opportunity to see and talk with school children, dance troops, artists, religious leaders and community agricultural projects. We did travel outside of the capital to farms and national parks as well. On the additional trips we traveled to the eastern and central parts of the island. All of the places we visited were carefully selected by the government. One of the things I noticed about after a few days was the subtleties of the selection of venues. The Cuban government has opened up cultural attractions that are referred to as ‘proyectos’, where inhabitants of various neighborhoods work to create a project that would benefit them, competing with other neighborhoods doing the same.



This Proyecto could be anything from building a cistern, creating a community garden, art school, either photography, mosaics, establishing an after school program focusing on music, dance, baseball, etc. One such place was a foundation created by ‘abuelos’, a program that connects young children and seniors, another trained barbers offering training to young men and women in the neighborhood. The winners of this contest are rewarded by

being one of the official venues for tourists. Americans visit their establishments, often tipping nicely, bringing money into the neighborhood. The government gets a percentage and the community group keeps the rest to invest in their project. For a communist country, I thought this was particularly genius. With no monetary investment on the part of the



government in these projects, the government ‘allows’ investment in the lives its citizenry while introducing tourists to a beautiful, community minded productive Cuba. Some of the other places tourists are brought to are artistic venues where internationally recognized masters practice their craft. This also brings money into the country and highlights the excellence of the arts in Cuba.

One of these such places is the Fuster Project, or Fusterlandia as it has come to be known. In the western outskirts of Havana, a run down neighborhood in the fishing village of Jamainatas, is a



mosaic wonderland reminiscent of Gaudí's Barcelona. José Fuster, an internationally recognized artist, often referred to as the Caribbean Picasso, began decorating his home in the 70's with pieces of recycled glass. This grew into a full out neighborhood project expanding his art work to include the

surrounding bungalows extending to the streets. Recycling glass and clay, Fuster creates images of Cuban life and history, including homages to La Virgen de la Caridad, Cuba's patron saint, as well as images of daily life in this fishing village. The art work is funky and spectacular. Visitors are welcomed into the home of Fuster where he or one of his interns graciously greet you. Art work is displayed and also available for purchase and the profits go back into the project. Residents of the surrounding homes sell handmade crafts on the street making this public art a community beautification project.



La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre or 'Cachita' is the protector of the Cuban people. There are many variations to the details of the story, but the basics are the same. Dating from the 1600s,



the story tells of three 10 year old boys, referred to as los tres Juanes, two indigenous brothers and one African slave, who were gathering salt in the Bay of Nipes, on the eastern side of the island. A storm came upon them and they were in danger. The boys noticed in the distance something white appear over the top of the waves. As they got closer they saw the figure of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus in her arms. Her clothes were not wet and she was standing on a plaque that said "Soy la Virgen de la Caridad". The boys went back to the copper mine to report this event to the overseer. A shrine was built there in her honor. However the statue kept disappearing and reappearing even though the doors were locked. Long story short, it was decided she was happier in the Sierra Maestra, so they built her shrine in the mountains where it remains today.

La Virgen de la Caridad is syncretized with the

Yoruba goddess Ochún who is represented as a mixed race woman, symbolizing the Cuban people. She is celebrated on September 8th, which is also the Feast of the Nativity of Mary in the Catholic calendar. Although Cuba has a secular government, Cubans on the island as well as in Miami reenact this event with celebrations. Cubans show their devotion to La Virgen as well as to Ochún by placing offerings of sunflowers, honey and pumpkins on her altar as well as wearing yellow.



Cuban cultural practices are syncretized with Yoruba practices. Santería, the religion practiced by the majority of slaves in Cuba, is still practiced today in Cuba and priestesses can be seen around Havana dressed in white linen. The Orishas are often comingled with Catholic saints, allowing slaves to practice their religion disguised as Catholicism. This comingling is present in everyday Cuban life from offerings and altars to representation in music and art.



This sincretismo is beautifully expressed in many of the poems of Nicolas Guillen. His poetry is a wonderful source for teaching about the racial complexities of Cuba, suitable for various ages and language abilities. The poem *Sensemayá, Canto para matar una culebra*, is a rhythmic poem appropriate for beginner levels. Some of my favorites are *Mulata*, a short poem that is simple enough for beginners to understand, both lexically and culturally and *La Canción del Bongo*, which offers the reader a glimpse into the infiltration of African influence. This one will get the kids up and moving with the chant and beat of African drums. These poems were recorded by the poet and you can play them for your students.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UspSnQgrBY , <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAo35AhaMJ8>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYmPFlyya_c)





Another place that was amazing was our visit to the Habana Compas Dance Company, literally meaning Havana Beat. Cuba is the most lively place I have ever experienced. There is music and dance on every street corner, every plaza and eatery. There are dancers in the streets, in the parks, and at any moment you can hear another form or music break out. Cuba has an incredibly rich mixture of musical influences, ranging from the *son* to the *rumba*, *guaracha*, a *bolero* and *salsa*. Although salsa originates in New York, it is heard everywhere in the streets of Havana. The dancers in this particular company were all young, training to perform outside of Cuba. They used everyday items as percussion instruments mixed with traditional instruments. The dancer/musicians combined the rhythms of Spain and Africa, creating what is quintessentially Cuban. This was an exhilarating experience. When I showed the video to my students they loved it. They were all moving without even realizing it. Cuban rhythms could make a rock dance. Take a look at one of the videos posted on youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Vlc0ewPI8M>

*Ésta es la canción del bongó:
 -Aquí el que más fino sea, responde, si llamo yo
 Unos dicen: Ahora mismo otros dicen: Allá voy
 Pero mi repique bronco
 pero mi profunda voz
 convoca al negro y al blanco
 que bailan el mismo son*

Canción del Bongo, Nicolas Guillen



Although Spain abolished slavery in 1811, Cuba rejected the ban and continued to hold slaves



until 1886. Slavery is finally abolished in Cuba shortly before gaining independence. Many black Cubans fought in the War of Independence, for North Americans the Spanish-American War. One of the most poignant visits was to a sugar plantation. Sugar was one of the most important products for Cuba, with North American companies pairing with plantation owners to earn huge profits at the ex-

pense of these slaves and exploit the plantation system. I am sure we all recognize Domino Sugar. Walking on the grounds of the plantation, seeing the living conditions, imagining the heat, the back breaking work and the suffering is something that is so dehumanizing and shameful. I would liken this experience to visiting a concentration camp. With the discussions in our own country contemplating what statues or tributes are truly worthy of our respect, we must also consider that we must never forget, perhaps recontextualizing history. Walking through the remains of the structures, the whipping post, the watch tower and the expansive fields, you couldn't help but cry thinking about the darkness and evil we humans are capable of in the name of money and religion.





Some of the other notable heroes celebrated all over Cuba either with a statue or some other form of propaganda are José Martí, who is one of the most prolific poets, although to be honest, I love his essays. Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and Hatuey are also revered in billboards and statues. Camilo Cienfuegos was a revolutionary who fought beside the Castro brothers as they made their way through the Sierra to Havana to overthrow Batista. They refer to it as The Revolution. But long before Che and the Castro boys, Cuba’s national hero is José Martí, the symbol for Cuban freedom. I have always found this so interesting and speaks to his brilliance in that no matter which side of the political fence you occupy, Martí is your man. His poetry, if you have never read it, is highly recommended. Sadly, his Versos Sencillos, popularized by Pete Seeger in the 60’s in his adaptation of Guantanamera, has made this song the anthem for American tourists traveling to Cuba. Although there are dozens of verses, they always seem to repeat the same first few ones. By the time I left Cuba the third time I thought I would be quite happy to never hear the song again. However, Martí’s versos are another matter and the version by Willy Chirino and Celia Cruz will move you. (a Guajira by the way is a country girl from Guantanamo.)

Yo quiero, cuando me muera,
Sin patria, pero sin amo,
Tener en mi losa un ramo
De flores, —y una bandera!
Versos Sencillos, José Martí,

Hatuey, another figure with a dedicated monument, is a figure that has been left out of most of our history lessons.

Hatuey was a Taíno cacique (chief). The Taíno people were the indigenous people inhabiting the island that we know as Hispanola. When Columbus arrived on the island, Hatuey's people were at first hospitable, according to the Bartolomé

de las Casas, only to be enslaved, tortured, dismembered, raped and sometimes slaughtered for not producing enough gold and silver to be delivered to Columbus. What the Spaniards did not realize is that there was no gold or silver to speak of on the island. Hatuey escaped to Cuba

to warn the people there about the Spaniards. Unfortunately they did not heed his warning

and, well we know how that ends.

Hatuey is eventually captured by the Spaniards and is publicly burned alive with some of his men, in spite of the objections of Montesinos, whose pleas have no effect on Columbus. He is a celebrated hero, con-

sidered to be the first warrior rebel of Cuba.

His face is not only commemorated in bronze but also on beer cans and bottles, as one of the official beers of the island, Hatuey. The beer was originally brewed by the Bacardi Family in Santiago.



Once you get out of Havana and discover other parts of the island, where cruise ships do not go, you begin to see a different kind of Cuba. A rural Cuba with beautiful landscapes, palm trees and mountains, national parks, beautiful coastal retreats. A Cuba where they do not speak English, don't necessarily have a phone, plow with an ox and live quite simply. The 'highway' in Cuba is what is left over from American engineers built decades ago. Repairs are barely required for the occasional pot holes, as most Cubans do not have cars and rely on either a public bus, which is really a challenge to use, or horse or ox drawn carriages. Intra-island travel is not very common for residents. Cubans who want to travel to other parts of the island stand on the entrance ramps displaying money for someone to pick them up, kind of like a communist Uber with a capitalist twist. Tour buses are fined if they pick anyone up.



On our way to Trinidad we stopped at the Botanical Gardens in Cienfuegos. This garden was established in 1899 and funded by Edwin Atkins, an American sugar planter and curated by



Robert M. Grey, a skilled horticulturalist, to focus on the hybridization of sugar cane. He also devoted his efforts to collecting and cataloging tropical plants from all over the globe. Many of these plants and trees are used for medicinal research. The gardens are beautiful and the horticulturist guide told us many stories of the uses the locals had for many of these fruits and leaves. Cashew trees are abundant in Cuba and I never knew that the seed, or nut, grows outside of the fruit. She also mentioned how curious she found it that we

Americans eat the nut, not the fruit of the tree. All a question of perspective, no?

There are so many places and important figures still to mention, but one such family of great importance to the development and history of Cuba is the Bacardi family. Facundo Bacardi emigrated to Cuba from Sitges, Catalunya in the early 1800's and in 1862 established the family distillery in Santiago de Cuba. For generations the Bacardi family has been an important player in supporting not only the rum industry but also the fight for self-determination. The family was instrumental in the fight for Cuban independence from Spain in the 60's and again at the turn of the century. The family became even more important during prohibition in the US. The company's campaign to escape to Cuba, where the rum flowed was a tremendous success. The Bacardi family has survived incredible adversities, earthquakes, fires, hurricanes, political threats, but continues to thrive. Opposing the abuses of Batista, the family supported the Castro regime at first, only to later feel betrayed and transferred their operation to the Bahamas and took their secret recipe to Puerto Rico and Mexico where they continue to be successful. The distilleries once owned by the family business are now operating under a different name in Cuba, Caney. The Bacardi family was also a great supporter of the arts. The spectacular Art Deco building in Havana that once housed the financial headquarters of the company is now an office building.



A few interesting facts about Bacardi, the bat, on every label of Bacardi rum, was added early on when Facundo's wife, Amalia, noticed bats hanging from the rafters of the distillery. Recognizing the bat as a Taino symbol of good health, family and unity, she suggested placing it on the label. A popular drink made with Bacardi rum is the Cuba libre, born in 1900 when American soldiers mixed Coca-cola and Bacardi, two parts coke, one part Bacardi, symbolizing a marriage of sorts of the brands. Bacardi claims in its advertising to be the rum that put Cuba on the map.

With each trip to Cuba, we began to notice something, something at first I barely paid attention



to. Talking to people we met that were not part of the tourism industry, Cuba is trying to place more economic responsibility on its citizens. The government has introduced opportunities for individuals, entrepreneurs, to develop businesses. People are restoring 'their' homes to open them up to tourists as bnbs or restaurants, paladares. Many of the menu items are purchased on the black market. The government seems to look the other way as long as they get their cut of the profits. Investment is encouraged from investors outside of Cuba, but of course not the United States. The investor must be a Cuban (so those who have relatives living in the diaspora can receive money from abroad, including the US) or you must be married to a Cuban citizen. Ownership is not a real thing, so, investment can be a huge risk. With each visit we noticed that more buildings were being restored, more people were proud to be 'owners', part of an emerging business class.

This was so palpable. In 2017 I noticed other changes. I noticed the increase in poverty and a greater separation of classes. When we got off the bus in Trinidad, an old man with a cane stopped us begging for soap. Imagine, something so simple and basic. Coming out of a restaurant we saw children begging, asking the tourists for something as we left, the door man yelling at them, we don't do that here, go away. So many are being left behind in this changing Cuba. This pierced my heart. I admit I felt ashamed after eating such a beautiful meal in a beautiful place, to see these skinny little kids begging.

*Le cayó comején al piano (lit. the piano got termites)
Things just got ugly - Dicho Cubano*

There is so much more to Cuba, I could spend pages and pages going on about it. It is truly complicated, so instead I will offer some suggested readings, music and artists if you are interested in learning more. The culture of Cuba is easy to bring into our lessons, it is such a rich, lively heritage. As an island and crossroad, the food is amazing, rooted in so many cultures



with so many influences beside Spanish, represented is African, Basque and French among them. The music is incomparable, the natural beauty is unspoiled and the people, as complicated as everything Cuban. And of course, there is the politics of Cuba. They are so connected to North America as well as Spain. The politics of South Florida are still tightly connected to the Cuba story. I always find it so interesting when my stu-

dents know so little about Cuba when it is so connected to our own story.

Although with each trip I brought back so many artifacts to use in my classroom, instruments, books, photos, cds filled with local musicians' works and games, for me these trips to Cuba were personal. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to see Cuba for myself, to travel the country and see with my own eyes and ears my heritage. To visit my grandparents' hometown and think how much it has and hasn't changed since they walked those fields. To understand the heartache of my husband's family, to see the house my husband was born in, the house his grandparents built and the business on the malecón now crumbling. For my husband, who came to the US as a refugee, left with some closure knowing his parents sacrifice was not in vein, glad they could not see the Cuba they left behind no longer exists.

I think there is a lot we can learn from our relationship with Cuba and from its people. I have never seen such an innovative, creative people, people who have so little. Their love and passion for music and art resonates on every street corner, their commitment to education and medicine exported world wide. Although their government seems to have abandoned many, they remain hopeful and fiercely independent.

Camarón que se duerme, se lo lleva la corriente/ The shrimp that falls asleep is carried away by the current. Dicho Cubano

Para Saber Más



José Parlá, from the *Wrinkles in Havana* series

Some of my favorite resources for understanding Cuba and the diaspora are listed below. Many of these resources can be used in our classes and fit nicely into lessons incorporating social justice questions. I especially like using the art and music. It is only a beginning, after all, *Cuba es complicado*.

Cuba Confidential, Love and Vengeance in Miami and Havana, Ann Marie Bardach. An excellent book delving into the relationship between Cuba, Cuban-Americans and the politics of South Florida. The best publication I have read understanding the complicated relationship between the US and Cuba.

The Cubans, Ordinary Lives In Extraordinary Times, Anthony DePalma. DePalma shares stories about the lives of contemporary Cuban life, not the tourist view of Cuba, the realities of the challenges of the average Cuban.

Biography of a Run Away Slave, Miguel Barnet. Author recounts the survival of a runaway slave, hiding in the Sierra unaware slavery has been abolished. Required reading for any Cubaphile.

Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy and *Learning to Die in Miami: Confessions of a Refugee Boy*, Carlos Eire.

Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba, Tom Gjelten.

The Prison Letters of Fidel Castro, Fidel Castro, Edited by Luis Conte Aguero. These are 26 letters Castro wrote while in the Presidio, the Cuban prison.

José Martí- *Versos Sencillos, Zapaticos de Rosa*, (from the collection *La Edad de Oro*) or any of his poems ; *Nuestra América* (essay) and any of his short stories.

Nicolas Guillén– Any of his works, wonderful pieces to open discussions about racism, not just in Cuba.

Music (this is only a partial listing, there are many, many more)

Ernesto Lecuona, Benny Moré, Pérez Prado, Celia Cruz, Rubén González, Ibrahim Ferrer, Pablo Milanés, Willy Chirino, Hansel y Raúl, Kelvis Ochoa, Orishas, Gente de Zona

Artists

Wilfredo Lam, Antonio Gattorno, Sandra Ramos, Pedro Pablo Oliva, Salvador Gonzáles Escalona, José Parlá

Bloggers https://www.14ymedio.com/blogs/generacion_y/ site dedicated to Cuban bloggers addressing politics and culture on the Island, Yoani Sanchez's blog is excellent as are her books which are collections of her blogs available in Spanish and English.

Frijoles Negros

Every Cuban household has a recipe for Black Beans. There are probably as many different recipes as there are cooks. Most Cubans eat them with white rice and when there are leftover beans but not quite enough for a nice soupy meal, we make 'moro' or 'congrí', which is white rice with the beans cooked together. Moro is short for moros y cristianos, I am sure you can guess how the dish got its name. (My grandmother used to put a smattering of either bacon or pork fat on top just in case our diet was short on fat.) Depending on the region, this dish is either moro or congrí. (We called congrí the mixture with red beans). This particular recipe uses vinegar, it seems that wealthier Cubans use Sherry.



1 lb. dried black beans
¼ cup olive oil
1 large onion, quartered
1 head of garlic (do not peel or chop)
1 green bell pepper (cut in half)
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
1 teaspoon oregano
2 table spoons of white vinegar (more or less)
2 tablespoons sugar
salt and pepper
cooked white rice

- Place the beans in a large bowl with room temperature water and cover, soak for about 6 hours or overnight.
- Drain the beans and fill a clean pot with enough cold water to cover the beans with plenty of room to spare.
- Add the onion, pepper, garlic (throw in with the skin and all) and bay leaf
- Cook over medium heat until the beans are soft
- Add the oil, vinegar, oregano, cumin, salt and pepper
- Continue cooking until you get a desired texture (some like them soupy, some a little more pasty)
- Remove the bay leaf (as well as the rest of the veggies if you don't like them)
- Serve over white rice

Some cooks serve this as a soup with onions and parsley sprinkled on top. Either way they are delicious and a great option for vegetarians, as they are a complete protein with the rice and loaded with vitamins!



I would like to introduce a new feature, Member Spotlight. We know we have many amazing educators who have made a difference in the lives of so many. In an effort to acknowledge this, we would like to feature in each newsletter one of our members. The member will be selected at random to be interviewed and share a bit about themselves.

This edition's member is Carmen Berg, a truly inspirational educator. Carmen has served as the Annual Conference Presenter Coordinator for the past four years and has done an amazing job helping to make our conferences a great success!

Carmen Berg
LILT Annual Conference Presenter Coordinator

"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives" Robert John Meehan



Q: How long have you been an educator?

A: I have been an educator for 7 years.

Q: Where and what do you teach?

A: I teach Spanish (FLES) at North Shore School District.

Q: What made you decide to go into teaching?

A: The passion for my native tongue, Spanish, and the love to serve our children made me decide to go into the teaching career.

Q: What advice would you give to a new teacher?

A: A new teacher should always reflect on his/her pedagogy, know her students and have fun!

Q: What do you enjoy most about teaching?

A: I enjoy seeing my students communicate in the target language and challenge themselves.

Q: What have been some of the benefits of your LILT membership?

A: Some of the benefits of my LILT membership is the connections I have made with other educators and the service I have provided as a Presenters Coordinator in the past four years.

Q: What do you like to do in your free time? Any hobbies?

A: During my free time I love to travel and spend time with my family in Honduras.

The Silver Lining...



As many of us scrambled and adapted to the new normal of remote teaching we experienced frustration, challenges and even out right failures. However, there were many positives that resulted from this experience. So, we asked our members, what was the best part of remote learning? Here is what some of you have to say:

There was a shift in teaching during remote teaching it was no longer I close my door and teach. There was so much collaboration amongst teachers that I was very pleased to see and be a part of these past few months.

Judy Goris Moroff

I think what I liked most about remote learning was sleeping in a little later, not commuting 45 minutes to school, sharpening my technological skills and being home with my daughter!

Lorraine Sabio

My school had us teaching mostly in synchronous time, and that forced me to invent ways of forcing students to participate actively throughout each lesson. I have always done all I can to follow ACTFL's 5 C's and the online blended platform gave me a chance to do more of that.

Dorothy Kleinmann.

My favorite thing about remote learning was the opportunity to experiment with a lot of tech I have never used prior to this experience. In particular I used a lot of interactive google slides choice boards, Padlet and FlipGrid for the first time with my elementary students.

Brianna Ruda

Here is an interesting and helpful resource :https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/9-ways-online-teaching/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+CultOfPedagogy+%28Cult+of+Pedagogy%29

Bill Anderson





There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Margaret J. Wheatley

LILT NEEDS YOU!

Looking to be part of a growing professional organization?

LILT has many opportunities for our members to get involved and promote best practices for language education. Interested in participating in a more active role? Consider offering a workshop for our annual conference. Information can be found on our website, www.liltfl.org

We will also be filling the position of Presenter Coordinator for our 2021 Annual Conference. The responsibilities include collecting information about each presenter and their workshop to include on the website and being the liaison for the presenters if questions arise. You will work alongside our present coordinator Carmen Berg this year to transition into the position. Please contact ddinatale@liltfl.org if interested.



Our newsletter is expanding to incorporate features that highlight our members, their successes and concerns as well as stories and anecdotes.

Do you have something exciting to share with our members? Perhaps a successful lesson or activity that colleagues could benefit from?

Do you have a story that you would like to share about traveling, food, or perhaps an inspiring quote?

The editor of the LILT newsletter welcomes your contributions! Please email your contributions and/or suggestions to csosa@liltfl.org.





Stipend to Attend LILT Annual Conference For New Members

A stipend to cover the cost of registration may be awarded to a New LILT member to help defray the cost of attending the annual LILT conference.

The applicant must be a new member of LILT by April 15 of the current year, and prepare a written one (1) page statement, in English, in response to the following: *How I hope to benefit from attending the Annual LILT Conference...*

The winning member will attend three (3) workshop sessions at the conference, and afterwards write a short article for the LILT Newsletter about the conference.

The article will be submitted to the Newsletter editor within one (1) month of the conference date. The article will include an evaluation of the conference, and a summary of three (3) workshops attended.

Completed applications must be postmarked
(United States Post Office postmark only) by **September 1, 2020**

Email to:
Ana Aguiar-Mady: aaguiarmady@liltfl.org

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2020 Professional Calendar

July 30–August 11, 2020 NYSAFLT Summer Institute, Virtual

October 23-24 NYSAFLT Annual Conference, Hybrid Format

November 14 LILT Annual Conference, Virtual

November 20-22 ACTFL Convention, Virtual

