What began with a call for papers for the 14th Triennial gathered intense momentum in the months preceding the conference when, like the unusually fierce winds that damaged massive trees in Vancouver’s Stanley Park, a storm of tasks pushed us to prepare for the arrival of nearly five hundred participants in mid-August from various branches of ACLALS and affiliated countries of the Commonwealth. In a move toward inclusivity, our six keynote sessions as well as the evening and noon-hour readings were open to the general public, with a good number of students also attending the conference, thanks to various grants.

The conference presented an impressive range and quality of papers, many of which will be in print in a forthcoming publication of the proceedings. The Open Conference Systems was undoubtedly a boon. In addition to making it possible to update conference news regularly, it enabled a Canada-wide review committee to vet proposals, and for those who were not able to travel to the conference to post their papers online for delegates to access at the conference. Through the digital medium we also avoided costly long-distance travel, with Arun Mukherjee (active Vice-Chair), Julie McGonegal (Secretary-Treasurer), and Josh Fagan (Graduate Assistant) in Ontario, Pamela McCallum (Program) in Alberta, Gugu Hlongwane (readings) in Nova Scotia, and Margery Fee (facilitator of research grant) and me in British Columbia.

The welcoming of East Africa into the Association was one of the significant events at our conference. Professor Christopher Wanjala’s proposal to the Executive Meeting was unanimously accepted, and the postal vote to the membership was ratified by the General Body. The inauguration took place in Kampala, Uganda in November 2007 during the People’s Forum preceding the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. ACLALS participated fully in this Forum (Geoffrey Davis and I having been funded by our respective universities and the CWF), and many attendees with whom we spoke have since joined EAAACLALS.

The saying “inside every large program is a small program struggling to get out” resonated much with us, as some of our major grants were confirmed uncomfortably close to conference and we had to go by estimates for some arrangements, resulting in our rather lighter fare - a fine balance to the feasts at 2004 Hyderabad - due in part also to campus summer scheduling. As well, we had to dance around parameters set by the increasing corporatization of universities, now requiring that conferences such as ACLALS pay for venues and services. However, our grants came in, and, along with registration fees, we were able to cover operational costs and various other expenses. I am relieved and happy to say that the conference has been deemed a success.

In the interest of wider dissemination of information, ACLALS has developed websites for the West Indies, South Africa, Malaysia, and East Africa branches. Not only has there been lively interaction within the membership, but ACLALS enjoys good rapport with external organizations such as the Commonwealth Consortium for Education, the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures (FILM), and with our major funding agency, The Commonwealth Foundation, who gave us grants during all three years.

Arun, Julie, and I wish to express deep appreciation to our volunteers who helped make the 2007 conference possible, as well as to York University for providing a graduate assistant and Kwantlen University College for granting me a sabbatical to organize the conference. Special mention must be made also of those who, though not members of ACLALS, showed a keen interest in the conference, giving unstintingly of their time and energy. To these friends of ACLALS, to our sponsors, and to the Vancouver local team who provided the all-important personal touch on site, my warmest thanks. My thanks also to everyone who made my term as Chair memorable.

ACLALS has now moved to Europe. Here’s wishing Geoffrey and his team every success!

Ranjini Mendis
(ranjini.mendis@kwantlen.ca)

The European branch of ACLALS is now taking on the task of running the organisation for the next three years. The board members are based in Belgium, Cyprus and Germany; the actual site of the headquarters is at the University of Liège (Belgium). Stephanos Stephanides of the University of Cyprus has enthusiastically agreed to join us as conference coordinator. He will be hosting the next Triennial conference
there in 2010. The other board members have already been to Cyprus to consult with him and his university colleagues and are greatly excited both at the innovative ideas of the local organisers and at the creative initiatives that a conference in a country which finally seems to be moving towards reunification offers. It is intended that the conference will incorporate the various cultures that make up Cypriot society, take account of the island's geopolitical location between Europe and the Middle East, and reflect Cyprus's membership of both the European Community and the Commonwealth. We will keep you all posted through the ACLALS Newsletter and the Internet and we look forward to seeing you in 2010.

Geoffrey Davis, Chair, ACLALS
davis@anglistik.rwth-aachen.de

CONFERENCE REPORTS
"Literature For Our Times"

It says something about the aesthetics of disparity (which the vast campus of the University of British Columbia embodies) that next to the Chan Centre, which outside has the charm of a nineteenth-century gasworks, a fascinating rose-garden on a slightly lower level leads to the famous Museum of Anthropology and provides a fine view over the water to Grouse Mountain. Because of its vast expanse, strangers to the place have, to a degree, to re-enact the spirit of the voyageurs if they want to find their way about. The foreign visitor was duly impressed by instances of the official bilingualism of the country, as exemplified by the locally bought toothpaste with its product information in relatively short English and somewhat longer French. To everybody's surprise, however, the centre of culinary gravitation, especially in the evenings, turned out to be Mahoney's Pub, definitely Irish and not only in name. Moreover, the ceremonial opening of the conference used the ritual and language of the people of the land, the Musqueam or 'People of the Grass', a branch of the Central Coast Salish. True to the Commonwealth aspect of the event, the chief's address was followed by the captivating performance of Maori singer and musician Mihirangi, who not only has a fantastic voice but also commands impressive technical skills in that she works a loop pedal and layers her vocals into a self-centred collage of acoustic soul-roots and funky r'n'b, whereby she creates intricate harmonies (cf. her CD Kutchu Nation, 2006).

In the spirit of Yaaśi Sgwansung Bill Reid's creation myth, Jeannette Armstrong conjured up a complex interdependence of orality, indigeneity, land and literature, and sought to emphasise environmental ethics in indigenous language and mythology. She effectively contrasted outside (Okanagan) and inside (Sylix) views of her culture. She was most convincing not when she extolled the ethos of reciprocity contained in the culture, but when she tried to demonstrate this by comments on language specificities. Words thus became quasi sentences. In the process, she displayed her competence in the high style of her mother tongue. The insistence that 'the people of the land' are called upon to protect biodiversity and to guard the spreading of the life-force made the 'word-warrior' of the En'owkin Center sound like an advocate of the new environmentalism. She came across as a good storyteller when she told the story of the turtle and the eagle - particularly when she sang the happy turtle's powerful song, whose melody strongly recalled the sound of running water as in a river. With the modest turtle outwitting the overbearing eagle, the message of selflessness and compassion was underscored and religious overtones became apparent, which were somewhat reminiscent of Tibetan Lamaism.

In his Anna Rutherford Lecture "The Descent of Postcoloniality", Stephen Slemen centred his slide-supported presentation on the history of mountaineering. With a tinge of nostalgia, he described the end of the old ethos of climbing and flag planting as in the days of Hillary and Tenzing. In a tour-de-force, he then used the in-built ascendency-descendancy metaphor to point out the analogy between mountaineering and the postcolonial field. In his view, both have long passed their zenith and are now in a process of decline.

Sivakami Palanimuthu thematised Dalit Literature. Her wearing several hats, however, as political activist, commissioner of the government of Tamil Nadu and successful novelist, did not make her task any easier since they tended to vie with each other in her argument. She sought to historicise changes by looking at her own novel of ten years ago. She emphasised the entanglement of caste with class, and the consideration of aesthetics as being of secondary importance under the circumstances. What worried her more was the effect of the rise of individuals in the social hierarchy and enhanced problems of inner diversity within the group of the oppressed as a consequence. Questions of Dalit empowerment are still dismissed by middle-class Indians as proof of their cantankerous nature.

Among several panels was a 'Writer Meets Critics' panel organized by Jill Didur and Susan Gingell, where the academic critics Fee (Vancouver), Clarke (Toronto), and Young (New York) discussed Daniel Coleman's book White Civility (2006) in the presence of the author. In the debate, the erasure of the racial aspect in the study of Canadian society was criticized as well as was the sole insistence on white differentiation. It was asked whether the concept of civility as such was not a French concept to begin with, and whether Canadian Britishness did not owe quite a lot to Scottish nationalism and the Scottish Enlightenment. Apart from younger writers, many of whom naturally came from Canada, father figures like Walcott and Ngugi gave highly acclaimed readings. In his talk Ngugi reflected on the role of languages in our times, the suppression of some and the death of others, the tendency to hierarchise and
writer and one of the IAS officers of Tamil Nadu of India, delivered her keynote lecture on “Riddles of Literature and the Dalits in India.” Sivakami rightly highlighted the failure of mainstream Indian literature to address the question of caste and the context of the emergence of Dalit literature. She pointed out that the Indian literature read as Post-colonial literature shares brahminical ideology. Her lecture generated a lot of discussion about the nature of caste inequality, untouchedability and other issues.

The panel on Dalit literature was also perhaps one of the first of this kind in ACLALS. The chair of the panel Ajmer Rode, a writer and poet, invited the local Dalit activists. Rode’s play Rebirth of Gandhi was staged, and paintings of the prominent Dalit intellectuals and leaders were exhibited. I discussed the constitution of Dalit public sphere in Telugu literature of Andhra Pradesh, India and the consequent emergence of Dalit literature, and Jai Birdi (Vancouver) presented a paper on the discrimination of Dalits in the Canadian context by the savarna Indians and others. Arun Mukherjee briefly summed up the significance of Dalit literature and her engagement with it.

The success of the conference is certainly due to the attention given to Native Canadian, African, Dalit and other literatures of our times.

ACLALS must be congratulated for democratizing its public space to involve Dalit writers and scholars at this conference. It is hoped that this tradition will continue.

K. Sutyanarayana (EFL University, Hyderabad)

The XIVth triennial ACLALS conference held at Vancouver in August 2007 showed, among other things, how far-flung the Commonwealth is (the previous conference in 2004 having been held at Hyderabad, a world away in more senses than one) — and how far Vancouver is from everywhere. All those of us who filled in a Canadian visa form had to furnish more detailed information not only about ourselves but also about our (non-travelling) parents and siblings whether dead or alive than we have ever had to fill in any other form. And after all that, on landing in Canada, a senior academic was asked by the immigration officer: “OK, so you are reading a 20-minute paper at this conference, as this letter says, but what are you going to do in Canada for the rest of the five days?”

She got through, eventually, and despite such let and hindrance, we were all glad to be there. The conference began on a truly stirring note, with a stately member of the First Nations beating his traditional drum and solemnly chanting as he led a small procession of dignitaries which entered from the back of the hall and slowly made its way to the dais, while the assembled audience gradually registered its import. On the dais, we turned out to be one chair short, and it was Ranjini Mendis, chair of the Association and director of the conference, who went and quietly stood near the wings until another chair was brought up. Such cheerful modesty was characteristic of her throughout the conference.

The literary lions of the conference, who made us feel privileged to be there with them, were Derek Walcott and Ngugi wa Thiong’o. After somewhat underperforming at the inaugural session due to a bad cold, Walcott generously returned the following evening to offer a more substantial reading and to answer with eloquence and wit questions on his teachers, his critics, cricket, and the abiding place of literature in our times.
Ngugi, as homespun and amiable as Walcott is grand and leonine, delivered an inspiring plenary on the enabling role of translation as a mediator between major and minor languages; he also read from his new magnum opus The Wizard of the Crow, and stayed on right till the delicious and delightful valentory dinner, mixing unassumingly with participants. Other plenary speakers spoke of and for the First Nations (Jeanette Armstrong), the Dalits (P. Sivakami), and the nature and claims of local (polyvocally British) as well as hybrid and hegemonizing global English (Robert Young). The innumerable parallel sessions demonstrated the vast range of postcolonial discourse, with two sessions focusing, for example, on Lawrence Durrell who is seldom discussed at such conferences. And the evening sessions of readings introduced us to an array of creative writers from amazingly diverse cultures and countries, some of whom are already famous and some likely to be so soon enough.

The beautiful and widespread campus of the University of British Columbia had us canter (or amble, sometimes waywardly) from venue to venue, taking in along the way the spectacular views from the rose garden and from other vantage points. Small congenial groups of participants prospected for meals not only at the food courts in the nearby Students’ Union but also farther afield at various off-campus restaurants including an atmospheric Irish pub with a superb menu. As Wendy Robbins put it, it was the healthiest ACLALS conference ever, with not much food and plenty of exercise.

Altogether, it was not only a grand conference in an exceptionally attractive setting but also the largest ACLALS conference ever (with nearly 500 registered participants), thus confirming for all of us that our Association has been in good hands and health. As a carryover from the Hyderabad conference, not one but three volumes of selected papers presented there were launched at Vancouver (for if India cannot do it better, it can certainly do it bigger), and we look forward to harvesting the pick of the rich crop at Vancouver in the book of the conference.

Harish Trivedi, IACLALS Chair

Mocked such views and sharply criticized the state which does out reforms in installments without making any demands for change in the oppressors’ attitudes.

Sivakami’s speech, I hope, will make us pay more attention to the caste and class issues in Postcolonial literatures.

The Chetna organized panel on “Dalit Awareness and Literature” staged a segment from a play called “The Rebirth of Gandhi,” written by Vancouver-based writer Ajmer Roedo. This witty and subversive play is based on a comment by Gandhi that he wanted to be born in an untouchable home in his next birth. Our room was full to the capacity and the audience responded very enthusiastically to the play.

Chetna also organized a special event at Dr. Ambedkar Library in Burnaby, B.C. on August 19, 2007 in honour of Sivakami’s visit. I had the great fortune to listen to an eloquent speech by Sivakami on Dalit land rights struggles in Tamilnadu at this event.

K. Satyanarayana and K.A. Geetha, two prominent Dalit scholars from India, also participated in the 14th ACLALS conference and spoke on Dalit interventions in the literary and academic spheres in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerala.

I hope that Dalit voices will continue to be heard in the next ACLALS conferences.

Arun Mukherjee, ACLALS Past Vice-Chair

Some Further Comments on the Conference:

“We were struck by the wide spread of presentations and the very large number of presenters and participants. Particularly impressive were the solo sessions by Derek Walcott and Ngugi wa Thiongo and Walcott’s brilliant handling of a question and answer session. Atmosphere was very pleasant and accommodation excellent. Ranjini and her team had done a great job!”

Bridget and Ashley Halpé, Sri Lanka

“I have extremely fond memories of my experience at the conference. Thank you so much for putting together such an excellent program.” Peter Leman, University of California, Irvine

“A great job was done by you all. Thanks for an invigorating, challenging and affirming conference” Mark Behr, Santa Fe
"...The conference offered intellectual stimulation not only from excellent speakers and readers but from high-quality sessions and plenty of evening events from which much delightful social activity flowed." Kelly Hewson, Calgary, Alta.

"My congratulations and thanks for a brilliant conference. I very much enjoyed myself and was greatly stimulated by the quality of the papers." Gabeba Baderoon, PhD, Post-doctoral Fellow, Africana Research Center

"I had a wonderful time at your well-organized and inspiring event." John Bandler, Professor Emeritus, McMaster University

"...I would like to say thank you for the wonderful conference you pulled together. I had a very inspiring and stimulating time." Christian Bok, Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific

"It was an excellent and productive conference, and I want to thank you for all the work that went into organizing it...." Lincoln Shlensky, University of Victoria

"...I thank you for your warmth and cordiality during my stay at UBC, and for your immeasurable help before and during the conference...." Mumia Osanjii, University of Nairobi

"Thank you very much for all that you did, starting from the visa application right to the end of the conference and a special thank you for your hospitality. I enjoyed the conference very much and had a wonderful time and met quite number of interesting people." Dilini Walisundera, Student, USA

"...The conference was a great success; we’ve never been treated to such a line up of established “stars” and such wonderful newcomers to ACLALS, too. The Dalit keynote speaker made a profoundly important contribution, as did Jeanette Armstrong, and Cheryl Suzack, too. I think this conference turned a very healthy corner, moving us in the direction of a more engaged, less esoteric and “vain” (Walcott’s word), criticism. At last." Wendy Robbins, University of New Brunswick

"I very much enjoyed the conference, especially the opportunity to meet scholars from all over the Commonwealth.” Pamela McCallum, University of Calgary

"Thanks again for this most wonderful conference ....You can surely be proud of this and I greatly enjoyed being part of this illuminating conference.” Karen Ikas, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

"Being connected even virtually with you all was a pleasure. I am happy I was able to contribute to the success of the conference, and hope to meet many of you again someday.” Bernett Cody, ACLALS Conference Website Manager

"I write to thank [Ranjini, Arun, and Julie] and the rest of the ACLALS community generally for recognizing my small part—and that of my many helpers—in the events of 16-22 August. As I’ve remarked to many delegates, I very much enjoyed the experience, and I am pleased to think I was of some help.” Bruce Raskob, Local Committee Coordinator, British Columbia

"I’ve been reflecting on ACLALS as one of the best conferences I’ve been to. Many thanks." Cheryl Suzack, UVictoria
ACLALS 2007 Conference

Musqueam Elder, Larry Grant, with First Nations Drummers at the Opening

Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott

Arun Mukherjee, Keynote Jeannette Armstrong, and Elder Larry Grant at the Opening Session

Keynote: Henry Giroux

Maori singer Mihirangi at the Opening Ceremony

Keynote: Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Keynote: P. Sivakami

Stephen Slemen (Anna Rutherford Lecture)

Keynote: Robert J.C. Young

Ranjini Mendis, Arun Mukherjee and Julie McGonegal

Plenary Speaker: Cheryl Suzack

Chris Wanjala (East Africa Chair) with Ngugi and Harish Trivedi
Book Launches and Readings

Fred Wah
Book Launch by Kavita Nanda
Book Launch by David Chariandy
Richard Van Camp
Roy Miki
Larissa Lai
Greg Scofield
Ajmer Rode
Ashok Mathur

At the banquet

Harish Trivedi (Valedictorian)
“Tandava” Musicians

Photos by Justin Cathcart
As on many occasions when I and many others have heard Dr. Giroux speak in public forums over the years, the atmosphere in the lecture hall at the University of BC for his August morning address to 100 or so academics—scholars, teachers, and students—was filled with anticipation. Giroux’s energy quickly became palpable in his passionate call for higher education to re-establish its purpose as a democratic endeavour, for faculty to recommit themselves to their dual role as critical educators and citizen leaders in the public sphere, and for a renewed critical pedagogy that expounds the potential emancipatory relation between knowledge and power. The goal of higher education and the mandate for all public intellectuals, in Giroux’s view, is to model and encourage critical thought essential to the positive reconstruction of our relations with each other in the pursuit of social justice. To do so, educators must engage in pedagogy that reinforces the relevance of the university in the common daily experiences of individuals. On this point, Giroux was provocative in the view of some of the attendees, calling for a curricula around plural knowledges of tradition, culture and community as well as the technology and media of mass and popular culture. In effect, he was is implored educators to lay claim to popular media and to assist students in acquiring the multiple literacies necessary to become not only cultural critics but also cultural producers who may shape the world.

Although Giroux’s closing words envisioned a positive reconnection between the potential of youth and a renewed democratic agency within education and educators, his initial thoughts establishing the context in which such a reconnection has become necessary were far more ominous. Giroux’s vision for the future of higher education—in part a re-establishment of the university’s modernist compact with the state to build democratic societies—is set against what he identifies as a debilitating neoliberal agenda within American and, increasingly, Canadian society. The societal reality he decried in repeated examples through most of the first half of his lecture is one in which market rationality supplants democratic practice, and in which youth are viewed as problematic and disposable rather than as precious resources for our democratic future.

As compelling as Giroux’s entreaty was, his assertions met with critical challenge as well as support. For many, Giroux’s systematic description of multiple events and actions in the U.S. over the last 6 or 7 years offered considerable evidence for his case that in recent years American society has become far less democratic and has demonized youth as never before. Still, questions from practitioners—teachers who have felt threatened by youth in the classroom—reminded all of us in attendance of the exigency of any given situation and the difficulty of reconstructing relationships within a societal context that seems at times to overdetermine our behaviours. Further stimulating questions were posed exploring perceived tensions within Giroux’s argument, and critical social theories more generally. One specific query cautioned against the construction of a new meta-narrative of emancipation based on western individualism in response to pervasive neoliberal discourse. Giroux’s responses were equally stimulating, focusing on the necessity of action in response to the present crisis he had described and foregrounding any singular notion of ideal societies...but steadfastly asserting our collective responsibility as educators to contribute to societies in which fervid commitments to justice and hope remain.

Robert Fleming, Kwantlen University College (session Chair)

Minutes of the ACLALS Executive Meeting

A meeting of the ACLALS Executive was held on 20 August 2007 in Vancouver during the 14th Triennial Conference.

Members Present
Ranjini Mendis International Chair, ACLALS
Arun Mukherjee Vice-Chair, ACLALS
Julie McGonagal Secretary-Treasurer, ACLALS
Tim Acton Previous Secretary-Treasurer, ACLALS
Neil ten Kortenaar Incoming Chair, Canadian ACLALS
Maria Casas Secretary-Treasurer, Canadian ACLALS (for Sukeshi Kamra)
Cynthia Leenerts Secretary, United States ACLALS (for John Hawley)
Harish Trivedi Chair, Indian ACLALS
Geoffrey Davis Chair, European ACLALS
Ashley Halpé Chair, Sri Lankan ACLALS
Sina Vaii Chair, South Pacific ACLALS
Michael Bucknor Chair, West Indian ACLALS
Chris Wanjala Chair, East African ACLALS
C.S. Lim Chair, Malaysian ACLALS

1. Minutes of the Previous Executive Meeting
Minutes of the previous Executive Meeting held at Hyderabad on 7 August 2004 were circulated. Ashley Halpé proposed one minor correction regarding the spelling of Rajpal Abeynayake’s name. Harish Trivedi seconded this motion and the minutes were passed.

2. Minutes of the 13th Triennial General Meeting
Minutes of the 13th Triennial General Meeting held at Hyderabad on 7 August 2004 were circulated. Sina Vaii proposed that the minutes be passed and Harish Trivedi seconded the motion.

3. Chair’s Report

4. Business Report
Julie McGonagal, the Secretary-Treasurer of ACLALS, presented the Business Report for 2004-2007. She reported that the ACLALS Executive was successful in securing funding from the Commonwealth Foundation (CF) for each of its three years in office, as well as in getting grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She said that ACLALS had recorded a surplus for the years 2005 and 2006 as a result of success in winning grants and extraordinary measures of economy. She emphasized that various sponsors and funding organizations have specific criteria for the distribution of funding for conference-related activities. She thanked the various donors and sponsors for their generous funding for the triennial conference and other ACLALS-related activities.

5. New Regulations for CWF Funding
Tim Acton described the challenges of collecting reports, and distributing CWF funding to ACLALS branches during the transition year (2004). Ranjini Mendis reported that the new administration of CWF has revised its funding procedures. She reviewed the contents of the Director’s letter detailing the distribution of funds. In response to a request for clarification by Ashley Halpé, she explained core and programme funding allocations. Arun Mukherjee emphasized the importance of public relations in promoting ACLALS to the CWF and other organizations.

Ranjini Mendis spoke of the fixed disbursements to branches decided at the 2001 ACLALS Executive Meeting, and suggested that the incoming Executive strike a committee to decide on future disbursement of funds. Sina Vaai expressed concern about the small amount of funding given to local branches, particularly given the tediousness of the application process, while C.S. Lim expressed concern that [the U.S. Branch] is excluded from Commonwealth Funding. Ranjini Mendis asked if it would be possible to propose a review of the basis and index of funding given issues of inflation and the launching of a new branch. Harish Trivodi raised the problem of the gap between CWF funding expectations and the goals and aims of ACLALS, and suggested having smaller meetings in order to make more progress. It was agreed that the distribution would be in terms of membership and the activities of each branch, on the basis of a year record and that distribution should be according to the strength of membership numbers and activities. Motion to make a decision to change the disbursement funding, either on the basis of number of members (problem of membership fluctuating with a three-year period) or activities (newsletters, conferences/workshops, publications) or a combination thereof. Proposed: Michael Bucknor; Seconded by Ashley Halpé. Approved.

Harish Trivodi proposed that the incoming Executive designate a Committee to study the gap between CWF aims and expectations and ACLALS institutional goals. Seconded by GeoffreY Davis. Approved.

6. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Geoffrey Davis reported that he and Ranjini Mendis attended the Commonwealth People’s Forum in Malta in November 2005. He noted that this was the first time ACLALS had been represented at the People’s Forum, as ACLALS has only recently been accredited to the Commonwealth in September 2005. He reported that the event brought together a range of participants working in diverse fields such as education, ecology, gender issues, human rights, and HIV/AIDS research. The theme was “Networking the Commonwealth People.” He emphasized the need to register for the Commonwealth Foundation’s Civil Society Forum and suggested Chris Wanjala as a potential delegate. It was agreed that Ranjini Mendis would register ACLALS for the People’s Forum at the 2007 CHOGM.

7. East African Application for Inclusion in ACLALS Chris Wanjala presented the proposal for the inclusion of the East African branch in ACLALS. The branch chairs reported that their members were unanimous in voting to include East Africa as a branch of ACLALS. Julie McGonegal collected the ballots from the branch chairs.

8. Launching of Branch Websites Ranjini Mendis reported that ACLALS had received funding from the CWF to develop websites for branches without websites, and that they were ready to be launched. The branches would be managing these websites locally.

9. Reports by Regional Chairs
   a) Maria Casas, Secretary-Treasurer of CACLALS, announced that Chimo, the CACLALS newsjournal, is now in electronic format. She also reported that the 2007 CACLALS Conference in Saskatoon was an Aboriginal Storytelling Conference. Together, she and Neil ten Kortenaar raised the concern that some Canadians presenting at the ACLALS triennial were not affiliated with CACLALS. Ranjini Mendis responded that the Constitution allows for non-members to register for the conference and that the registration fee structure included a non-member category. Members of the ACLALS Executive, together with the Branch Chairs, agreed that it would be impractical to impose a mandatory membership for ACLALS conference delegates.
   b) Cynthia Leonards, Secretary of USAACLALS, presented a report of the USAACLALS Conference held in Santa Clara, California. She recorded that the finances of the Association were in the black.
   c) Geoffrey Davis, Chair of EACLALS, presented a report of the 2005 Triennial EACLALS Conference held in Malta. The conference attracted over 250 delegates and included a North African focus, adjudication of the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize, an Anna Rutherford memorial lecture, and collection for victims of the tsunami. He announced that the next EACLALS conference will be held in Venice in March 2008 and that CHOTRO conference, to be held in Delhi in January 2008, was being organized by IACLALS. He said that the Journal of Commonwealth Literature could be accessed through the EACLALS website.
   d) Ashley Halpé, Chair of SLACLALS, reported that the Association’s last Triennial Conference, “Texts and Texts,” had been very successfully attended. He said that SLACLALS had brought out the 17th volume of its journal Phoenix and announced that the theme of the next triennial will be “Postcolonialism in Crisis?”
   e) C.S. Lim, Chair of MAACLALS, reported that in March 2007 the Malaysian branch collaborated with the newly-formed society Malaysian National Literature Association to host a conference. In the past year the branch had disseminated book packages to local school and college libraries; he added that it will host a talk on Anthony Burgess in January 2008. His report concluded with an update of the activities of the Southeast Asian Review of English (SARE).
   f) Sina Vaai, Chair of SPACLALS, presented a report on the 2004 SPACLALS Conference “Culture Crisis and Conflict in Oceania.” She also reported that the South Pacific chapter was actively preparing for its triennial to be held in 2008.
   g) Michael Bucknor, Chair of WIACLALS, reported that the WIACLALS branch had a very active seminar series on Caribbean literature. Other activities reported were: a reading by Chima Achebe, who joined WIACLALS branch under auspices of bicentenary; a collaborative project of the Journal of West Indies Literature, the launch of a number of books on Caribbean literature and poetry; and a conference commemorating Louis Bennett planned for January 2008.
   h) Harish Trivodi, Chair of IACLALS, reported on the organization’s annual conferences, including one at Benares Hindu University in 2007 on the theme of “1857 and After” and one forthcoming in 2008 in Udaipur on “Performing the Postcolonial.” He noted that IACLALS continued to hold annual workshops in October, recently concentrating on
centenaries. He also announced that the journal *Commonwealth Literature* had published the proceedings.

10. Proposal for the next Triennial Conference

Geoffrey Davis suggested that the next proposal should come from South Africa. Ranjini Mendis pointed out that the South African branch had not accepted an invitation to host the ACLALS Conference. Geoffrey Davis agreed to host the next Triennial in Europe.

11. Any Other Matter

a) Harish Trivedi raised the point that perhaps unaffiliated delegate fees should not exist as part of the registration fee for ACLALS Triennial Conferences, suggesting that all participants should have to be members of ACLALS. Other members raised the difficulty of collecting fees from participants not residents of countries associated with any of the local branches, and the need to give delegates a choice in the matter.

b) Harish Trivedi also suggested having Branch Chairs recommend the amount of funding given to various delegates of ACLALS Triennial Conferences who are members of their branches. It was agreed that it would be left to the incoming ACLALS Executive to decide the matter.

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**Minutes of the 14th ACLALS Triennial General Meeting (TGM)**

An ACLALS Triennial General Meeting was held on 22 August 2007, at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, during the 14th ACLALS Triennial Conference.

1. Ratification of the Agenda

The agenda of the 14th TGM was circulated. The agenda was ratified with one minor addition by Helen Tiffin, to include a final item: “Any other business.”

2. Minutes of the 13th Triennial General Meeting

Harish Trivedi requested that a fuller list of sponsors of the 13th Triennial Conference be provided. Motion to approve the Minutes: Ashley Halpé; Seconded: Harish Trivedi; Approved

3. Report from the Chair of ACLALS including Financial Report

The International Chair, Ranjini Mendis, reported on the activities of the ACLALS Executive Committee 2004-2007. She announced that ACLALS received grants from the CWF during all three years and, thanks to the good offices of Ken Goodwin and Alastair Niven, became formally accredited to The Commonwealth for funding purposes and participation at the biennial CHOGM. Among other activities she reported on were: ACLALS membership in the Commonwealth Consortium for Education; representation at the 16th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in Cape Town; continued membership in FLLM; the development of the ACLALS website and conference website; and the organization of the 14th ACLALS Triennial. Regarding the latter, she outlined the challenges of conference organization, given the increasing corporatization of the Canadian university, and the impact of venue and finances on delegate registration fees. She mentioned that the ACLALS Articles of Association allows also for unaffiliated members. She acknowledged the generous support of the Commonwealth Foundation (CF), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Canada Council for the Arts, UNESCO/FILLLM, and other sponsors of the 14th Triennial Conference. She also thanked the members of the 2004-2007 Executive and all who helped to organize the conference.

Following this report, Wendy Robbins emphasized the exorbitant costs associated with hosting of conferences in Canada. She also recommended readjusting conference registration fees due to the casualization of the professional labour force and suggested considering in future a category for the unwaged as well as part-time and sessional lecturers.

Harish Trivedi suggested linking registration fees to the earnings of members. Motion: Helen Tiffin proposed that such issues come under “Other Business.” Seconded by Chantal Zabus.

4. Reports from the Regional Chairs

a) Ashley Halpé (SLACLALS) reported that SLACLALS’s last triennial conference in 2005 had been successfully attended. He said that the Association had brought out 7th volume of journal *Phoenix* and announced that the theme of the next triennial would be “Postcolonialism in Crisis?”

b) Harish Trivedi (IACLALS) gave a brief account of the IACLALS annual conferences held in 2005, 2006, and 2007. He said that selected papers had been published from each of the annual conferences, with the Conference Proceedings of the 2007 IACLALS Conference forthcoming soon. He reported that IACLALS publishes its newsletter every six months, with the newsletter going out through the Association’s website.

c) Sina Vaal (SPACLALS) reported on the SPACLALS Conference held in Samoa in 2004. She added that the Association was currently in the process of organizing a conference for later this year and that there would be a turnover in the SPACLALS Executive in 2008.

d) Michael Bucknor (WIAACLALS) reported on WIAACLALS’ very active seminar workshop in which graduate students and faculty have presented papers, several books have been launched, and readings have been hosted by Chimua Achebe and Edward Baugh. The association has published a recent issue of the journal West Indian Literature in honour of Edward Baugh. He added that the next annual conference would be held in January 2008 in Barbados.

e) C.S. Lim (MACLALS) gave a brief report of MACLALS’ various activities, including talks, readings, and performance workshops. He said that the Association had compiled and delivered book packs to schools and colleges and participated in an international literary festival.

f) Maris Casas, Secretary-Treasurer of CACLALS, reported on the 2005 CACLALS conference at the University of Western Ontario and the 2006 conference at York University. She announced that the CACLALS journal Chimo had gone to an online format as had the Association’s membership renewal system.

g) Geoffrey Davis (EACLALS) reported on the EACLALS triennial held in Malta in 2005. He reported on two upcoming conferences: the first in January 2008 in New Delhi (in collaboration with IACLALS), and the second in March 2008 in Venice.

h) Cynthia Leeners, Secretary of USAACLALS, reported on the USAACLALS conference at the University of Santa Clara, California. She said that the event was an international affair, attracting many delegates from outside of the United States.

5. A new East African Branch

Chris Wanjala, of Nairobi, Kenya, presented a short report stating the objectives of an East African branch and expressed the hope that East Africa would be included as a local branch of
ACLALS. Ranjini Mendis announced that ACLALS members had voted unanimously in favour of the inclusion of the East African branch through a postal ballot. Vote was ratified by the General Body. On behalf of the membership, Ranjini Mendis officially welcomed East Africa to ACLALS.

6. E Ballots
Following a discussion concerning the current voting process and the merits of electronic versus postal ballots, Ranjini Mendis stated that members had voted all but one in favour of email ballots and e-ballots could be supplemented by postal ballots for those who prefer the latter. Vote was ratified.

7. Gender Neutral Language
Wendy Robbins spoke briefly in support of amending the Articles of Association to reflect gender neutral language. Vote was unanimously in favour. Ratified.

ACLALS INTERNATIONAL
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
as at June 30, 2007

General Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current assets</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$49,974</td>
<td>$31,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposits for conference costs</td>
<td>4,768</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid conference costs</td>
<td>6,839</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$61,581</strong></td>
<td><strong>$32,285</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current liabilities</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$1,950</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid conference registrations</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,310</strong></td>
<td><strong>900</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Fund balance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$58,271</td>
<td>$31,385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of cash</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants and donations</td>
<td>$52,077</td>
<td>$24,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest income</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds returned from branch</td>
<td>52,102</td>
<td>26,219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses of cash</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchased services and executive expenses</td>
<td>20,017</td>
<td>16,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding sent to regional branches</td>
<td>14,096</td>
<td>14,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,113</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,324</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash balances, beginning of year</td>
<td>$31,985</td>
<td>37,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,989</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5,105)</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash balances, end of year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$49,974</strong></td>
<td><strong>$31,985</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1: PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION
ACLALS International is The Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. It is a not-for-profit association organized to promote and coordinate Commonwealth Literature Studies, organize seminars and workshops, arrange lectures by writers and scholars, publish newsletters and hold one conference triennially. There are operating chapters of ACLALS worldwide.

2: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES
The association uses the unrestricted fund method of accounting for grants and donations. The General Fund accounts for the organization’s program delivery and administration activities. Revenue is in the form of grants from the Commonwealth Foundation, donations from universities and other sources and interest income. All revenue is recognized upon receipt. All funds are stated in Canadian dollars.
Inauguration of East Africa ACLALS

At the People's Forum

East Africa ACLALS, and Chris gave a talk on “Popular culture in East Africa,” touching on the evolution of East African literature in English. Danson S. Kahyana (Department of Literature, Makerere University) invited Chris to join a panel of Commonwealth writers to discuss the “Mission of Writers in Africa” at which many interesting questions were raised.

The three ACLALS representatives met Kizito Serumaga, the son of the late East African writer, playwright and radio journalist, Robert Serumaga, who was Secretary-Treasurer of ACLALS between 1971 and 1974, while the Malawian poet, diplomat, and academician David James Rubadiri was the Chairman of ACLALS, and the late David Cook and Rose Mboza were active members. Serumaga and Rubadiri were elected to take charge of ACLALS at the Kingston, Jamaica ACLALS Triennial in January 1971, and they hosted the Triennial Conference in Kampala, Uganda, in 1973. David Rubadiri has since been a Senior Lecturer at Makerere and University of Nairobi, and Professor at the University of Botswana, Permanent Representative of Malawi to the UN and Vice-Chancellor, University of Malawi.

Kizito and his brother Robert Serumaga (Jr) are engaged in resuscitating Buganda expressive culture, religion and political participation by using creative writing, film making, ICT, radio broadcasting and political activism. Kizito showed willingness to join EAACLALS and spoke of revisiting his father’s prose books, plays, and manuscripts, to recapture the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of the Baganda which was desecrated during the reigns of Milton Obote (the founding President of Uganda), Idi Amin, Obote’s other, and the current President, Yoweri K. Museveni who is believed not to be doing enough for the feudal kingdom of Buganda.

EAACLALS is born and is in sound health. Its personality will soon be manifested in the family activities of ACLALS. Many writers and literary scholars from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi want to join EAACLALS, including Dr. Wotsuna Khamalwa, Director of the Institute of the Sociology of Religion and Language at Makerere University, and formerly Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. We are all happy that EAACLALS was launched at the Kampala CHOGM.

Chris Wanjala, EAACLALS Chair

"I am writing on behalf of the Commonwealth People's Space steering committee to express our sincere gratitude for your [ACLALS'] contribution and involvement in the CPS, 19-23 November 2007. The content that came from ACLALS was a great addition to the success of the event at which a total of 10, 242 people attended." From a letter by Anne Babina, Co-ordinator, The People's Space, Kampala, Uganda, Dec. 6, 2007.

News and Announcements


David Charlandy's novel Soucouyant, was short-listed for the CWP Regional Prize, long-listed for the Scotiabank-Giller prize, and was also a finalist for the Governor General's Award.

Yasmine Gooneratne's novel The Sweet & Simple Kind (Perera Hussein Publishing House, 2006) has been short-listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2008. It was also short-listed for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2007.


Wendy Robbins received the prestigious Governor General’s Award in commemoration of the Persons Case at a formal ceremony in Ottawa on Oct. 17, 2007. The Persons Award is given to candidates for a lifetime of achievement in advancing the cause of equality for girls and women, and for enriching their communities in significant and substantial ways. Dr. Robbins says this very meaningful award helps to boost the morale of activists across Canada.

"Chotto 2" Conference: January 4th-January 7th, 2009, Bhasha Centre, Baroda & Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh, Gujarat, India. Contact: Professor Geoffrey V. Davis (davis@anglistik.rwth-aachen.de)

The 2008 Branch Reports may be accessed on the ACLALS website, at www.aclals.org.

Produced by Ranjini Mendis, Julie McGonegal, and Josh Fagan. Printed by Cambridge Press, B.C. Canada