

Preface – THT 2008 Proceedings

By Patrick Dougherty, THT President

The year 2008 will stand in the history of Teachers Helping Teachers as a time of tragedy and resolve. In April, THT lost its founder and guiding force, Bill Balsamo, to cancer. In June, THT became a Special Interest Group of the Japanese Association for Language Teaching, and in November, THT had its inaugural General Meeting and first election of officers. THT carried on, through it all, and successfully held conferences in Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines. In this, the third volume of Teachers Helping Teachers Proceedings, you will find mementos and monographs from the hard-working and openhearted members of the THT delegations to those events. In reviewing the year, I would like to thank those whose efforts allowed for the fruition of our plans. First and foremost, I would like to thank our hosts in Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Without the efforts of Lao-American College Co-Director Virginia Van Ostrand, the University of Hue's Dr. Tran van Phouc, and our tireless organizers in the Philippines, Amelita Matsushita and April Alcazar, our THT programs would never have succeeded. They, and the legion of dedicated workers and helpers who aided in organizing and conducting each THT event, deserve our sincere gratitude. Secondly, I would like to thank our newly minted collection of THT officers for volunteering their time and toil: Treasurer, Anthony Torbert; Membership Chair, Colin Graham; Program Chair, Peter Wanner; and Publications Chair, Brent Jones. A willingness to blaze new trails, set precedent, and be creative is the hallmark of this bunch, and we are privileged to have them. A special note of thanks to Brent for taking on the role of editor for these THT Proceedings as well the past two editions. It has been something of a herculean effort in that he has done the vast majority of the work himself. Third, I would like to thank the teams of THT volunteers who kindly gave of their time, finances, intellects, and teacher know-how, to make our conferences a success this past year. Whether it was dealing with last minute schedule changes, a power-outage, a desk-sized spider crawling up the chalkboard, or dozens of children so exuberant they pulled you in twenty different directions at once, you all showed grace, compassion, and spines of steel. You were wonderful. All through it, this year of loss, challenges and triumphs, we have maintained our mission, to be of service and support to our brethren educators and students in developing areas of the Asia Pacific region. What a journey it has been. These proceedings are a reminder of the wealth of information shared in the course of that journey. It is fitting that we, the members of THT, dedicate these pages to our late friend, mentor, guide, and comrade in the classroom, Bill Balsamo.

“We’re not just an organization, we are an idea, a concept.”

-- THT Founder William Balsamo