
German Studies Association

Newsletter

Volume XXIX
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Section One Association News

GSA Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference of the German Studies Association will take place at the Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel, 1700 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia. Dates are October 7 – 10. The hotel is located close to Ronald Reagan National Airport, serving Washington, D.C. and surrounding areas, and there is a shuttle pick-up service. For the shuttle, call the hotel after arrival.

All conference registration and hotel reservation for 2004 is on line. There is walk-up on-site conference registration opening on the Thursday afternoon of the Conference, October 7. To register on line, it is necessary to have a MasterCard or Visa, or the international affiliate card, such as EuroCard. The hotel reservation on line can also be guaranteed with an American Express or Diner's Club Card, but Conference Registration does not accept those additional cards. GSA only recognizes the MasterCard and Visa logos. The hotel will not accept any reservations on the telephone, either at the 800 number of the chain, or the hotel directly. Nor will the hotel chain web site accept reservations at the GSA rate. Hotel reservations at the GSA rate will be available **ONLY** at the GSA web site.

If you do not register online, you will be able to register at the GSA Registration Desk at the hotel, and the desk will open on the Thursday afternoon of the Conference. Hotel reservations at the GSA rate are only available to those who register online. All those who do register online will be able to pick up their registration materials and meal tickets at the desk after arrival. The desk will also be open on Friday and on Saturday morning.

How to register for the Conference and Reserve a Hotel Room – Please go to the GSA web site at www.g-s-a.org and click on Conference 2004 on the site. You will be taken to the GSA Conference 2004 Main Page. Here, you will find information about the Conference, including the Preliminary Program, Session Times, and Index of Participants. There is other information here as well. You will immediately see the Registration and Reservation section. Click on that, and you will be taken directly to the Conference Registration section. Here, you will be guided through the procedure step by step. Each page is self-explanatory. If you make a mistake, you will be able to re-enter the site later, but you will need to remember your PIN ID for that purpose. So, do write it down. It is important to read **READ ME FIRST** first. So, do not forget to read it. If you have kept your dues form, you already have a PIN ID. It is your membership number. Non-members can create their own PIN. If you haven't kept your dues form, the web

site will send you the PIN to your e-mail address of record on the membership immediately. If you have changed your e-mail address, you will need to inform us. Don't worry, help is just an e-mail away to thegsa@earthlink.net which is our special help line to Mr. Ramaswamy Vadivelu, our tech support person.

Your computer **MUST** be able to accept cookies to complete this process. If your computer is set to reject cookies, turn that feature off while you are doing this. You can turn it on again as soon as you are finished. This is very important. Our computer **MUST** be able to communicate with yours.

Keep your credit card handy. This process is just as simple as buying a book on line from one of the retailers, like Barnes & Noble or Amazon. Actually, the GSA web site is much easier than buying a book online from Barnes & Noble. I know, I tried it. You also create a shopping cart, by selecting what it is you want – what registration, how many, what meals, whether vegetarian, and so on. It is just like checking boxes on a paper form.

Now, when you have finished, you will check out, and complete the purchase. When this is done, your credit card will be instantly charged. This is why you cannot go back later and change anything. Obviously, any change would affect the price. So, since you have been charged, you cannot change it. So, why keep the ID and go back later? Well, when the Hotel has picked up your reservation, they will note that. This is your hotel confirmation. So, with your PIN ID you can go back and check to see if your hotel reservation has been confirmed.

OK, suppose you wanted to order an additional meal – no way. Do it right the first time. You can always go to the GSA Registration Desk at the Conference and see if there are meal tickets left for sale. Sorry. No multiple entry visas in GSA country.

How to ask questions if you have a problem – GSA has a help feature. You can write an e-mail to thegsa@earthlink.net, which is our special e-mail just for electronic help features. Your e-mail question will be read and answered by our electronic communications specialist, Ramaswamy Vadivelu. No, we have not outsourced to India. Mr. Vadivelu works in our office. We have IN-sourced from India.

Receipting – you will be able to print a receipt for the conference registration from the site. In addition, your credit card company will list the charge on its statement. Don't forget to print out your own receipt. If you do forget, you can pick one up at the GSA Registration Desk at the Conference after the initial crush has subsided.

Should you wish to make a change in your hotel reservation, you can call the hotel at any time after they have picked up your reservation request from the site, and ask them. They will make changes to existing reservations, but will not make new ones. For new reservations, they will refer you to the site. Why are we so careful about having the reservations made only through the site? For the same

reason that other associations do this, either through their sites or through a reservations agency. The reason is that we have protected our rooms at the special rate we have, so that only our participants can get them. If other persons could simply call a number and reserve a room at our rate, or call the hotel, or go to a hotel web site, then our block of rooms might be sold out before our conference participants would be able to book a room. Some people might get no rooms at all, or only a room at a much higher rate. Therefore, we protect our room block for our conference participants.

Conference Special Features – This year's Conference has several special features.

1. **Berlin Program.** The German Studies Association participates in the selection process for the Berlin Program at the Free University of Berlin. This prestigious and useful research program is described on the GSA web site. Members and others who are interested in the possibility of applying for the Program may want to attend the special session devoted to it. You will meet persons versed in the selection process, and those who have participated in the Program in the past.
2. **Paired Sessions.** There are a number of paired sessions, or themes that run through several sessions. These are often designated by Roman numbers after the session title. The practice enables GSA to offer a virtual symposium-within-a-conference, so that more extensive focus can be applied to various themes, and individuals are welcome to participate either in any one session or in all of the sessions on that theme.
3. **Conference Group on German Politics.** This association, an affiliate of the American Political Science Association, will sponsor sessions, and will hold its Annual Business Meeting at the GSA Conference on Saturday afternoon at 5PM, just after the sessions have ended. The CGGP notes that there are more sessions on German politics at the GSA than in any other scholarly association meeting in North America.
4. **DEFA Film Archive.** The DEFA Film Archive at the University of Massachusetts will host a special film festival on Thursday, October 7, running from 5 – 8 PM in the Conference Hotel. The DEFA Film Archive is a resource for all scholars in German Studies, and information will be available on how to integrate DEFA films into your own campus and instructional needs.
5. **GSA-DAAD East European Scholars Program.** This is the final year of the three-year GSA-DAAD East European Scholars Program, where we were able to fund the participation of scholars

in German Studies from eastern Europe. There will be four scholars in the 2004 Conference, and members are urged to make an attempt to meet them and to introduce them to your own work and interests. GSA encourages networking among scholars, and this opportunity opens possibilities from Olomouc to Wrocław.

Meal Speakers at the Conference

As you purchase your tickets for the meals at the GSA Conference, there are certain factors to keep in mind. First, GSA sets the meal prices artificially lower than they would otherwise be. Actual costs are much higher. If you want to compare these with restaurant prices, it is really very difficult. First of all, a banquet price includes a full-course meal, from salad to dessert, and also beverage. Most restaurants do not price their main courses this way. Secondly, the GSA meal prices include tax and tip. No restaurant does that. Therefore, when compared to other association rates, our prices are very competitive. Something else important is there – the price of your hotel room is a function of how many meal tickets are sold. Did you know that the hotel goes through a complicated process of determining profit and loss on a conference, and that the number of meal tickets sold actually plays a role in how low they can go on a hotel room night charge? The more meals, the lower the hotel room night charge.

The Dinner Speaker at the 2004 Conference will be David Calleo (Political Science, The Johns Hopkins University). He will address German-American and European-American relations in the current global context. One Luncheon Speaker will be the noted German author, Sten Nadolny. His topic will be "Meine besten Bücher – die ungeschriebenen?" The other Luncheon Speaker will be the new Austrian Ambassador to the United States, Eva Novotny, who will speak on Austria and the Enlargement of the European Union. Reserve and pay for your meal tickets online, so that you are sure to have them.

Audiovisual Equipment at the GSA Conference

The 2004 Program Committee has assigned audiovisual equipment for the Conference. This year, for the first time, the session and equipment list has been placed on the web. Please check your session there. If your session is not there, it has not been approved for a/v. If your piece of requested equipment **has not been listed there, it has not been approved** and it will not be supplied. The co-payment charges will be made before the conference. No refund of co-payment charges is possible – if you do not need the equipment, or if you do not come to the conference and therefore do not need it, or you do not want the equipment ordered for whatever reason, the charge will not be refunded. The cost of processing refunds is greater than the amount of the co-payment. Do understand that these amounts are co-payments, and that they represent only a small fraction of the total cost of the rental of the equipment.

Why is this list available on our web site? First, to help all of those who have

requested equipment and need to know if it has been approved. Second, to avoid confusion as to who has been assigned what and where at the last moment, during the conference itself. Third, to ensure that those whose requests could not be approved to know that they should either bring handouts or revise their presentation. And, fourth, to ensure that, during the conference, someone does not run up to me in a panic and start shouting at me that the thought that they had been approved for a/v. Alas, this has happened.

What to do if your request has not been approved? Bring handouts and/or revise your presentation. GSA has a budget, and we cannot support requests beyond our budget.

I want to do a Powerpoint presentation, and GSA has refused all Powerpoint presentations. At the moment, rental equipment for Powerpoint is simply much too expensive. GSA has the option of purchasing equipment, but there is no one available to haul it back and forth to the Conference. Presently, we do have someone to carry the GSA overhead projector back and forth. We hope to solve this problem in the future. If you have any suggestions, come to the Business Meeting and offer them. They are surely welcome.

GSA Business Meeting at the Conference

The Association will hold its annual Business Meeting as usual at the Conference. All members are welcome to come. Non-members cannot vote. This is your association, and all members who are at the Conference should be prepared to come. You will learn about what is going on in the Association, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions. You will have an opportunity to offer your own views and suggestions. This is your Association, and it will be your Business Meeting. We do not serve anything at the Business Meeting, just information. The GSA no-host Cocktail Reception follows the Business Meeting. You can get happier there. Members and non-members are welcome to the Cocktail Reception.

Other Receptions at the Conference

Certain groups are entitled to hold receptions or meetings at the GSA Conference. These are announced in the Program. Some are open to all participants, some to only those invited.

GSA does not have a table for the distribution of information and brochures at the Conference. People have asked about this. I have seen them at other conferences. Generally, the table(s) start the morning looking neat and cleanly stacked with brochures and materials. Within one hour, the tables resemble a disordered pile of paper in which nobody can find anything even if they were looking for it. In other words, a junk pile. Even regular attendance by a staff member, who tries to sort and clean up the table, does not help. The seminars, symposia, and other events announced there are not appropriately represented by

a junk pile.

Therefore, there is no table for such distribution at GSA.

GSA Elections Results

Sara Lennox (German, University of Massachusetts) was elected Vice President of the German Studies Association, and in the rotation system among disciplines, she will succeed Katherine Roper (History, St. Mary's of California) as President. Elected to three-year terms on the Executive Committee were Mary N. Hampton (Political Science, Air Command and Staff College in Alabama), as well as Stephen Brockmann (Germanistics, Carnegie Mellon), and Gary Cohen (History, University of Minnesota). Those elected take office on January 1, 2005 and will attend the Executive Committee meeting at the GSA Conference in October as guests.

GSA Web Site Progress

Members have noted the new format of the GSA web site. We thank our Web Vassal, Terry Pochert of Infomedia, Inc. He has provided a beautiful site with a user-friendly atmosphere.

There are four significant areas of change under way. First, as explained above, all GSA Conference Registration and Hotel Reservations can now be handled on line. This is extremely efficient, and will enable us to process your wishes with less bureaucracy. The next step is coming, and that is the on line membership system. By the end of the year, the entire GSA membership data base will be on line, and you can manage your own membership data and dues payments on our web site. This means everything from address changes to credit card payments. Billing and payment will be automatic, and we will be able to save considerable money by not having double and triple addresses for people as well as spending staff money and time tracking down people with missing digits on their credit card accounts, and so on. You will not lose a GSR by having it being mailed to an old address. Third, we now have a page of links. This is growing, and we will be expanding the link system, arranging it by theme, so that you can go to our web site and link to useful sites for your own interests. Fourth, and perhaps most revolutionary, is that GSA is following the path of the Renaissance Society of America and other organizations in putting the Conference Proposal system for the GSA Conference online. The RSA has been doing this successfully for years, and it is the only way they accept conference proposals.

The new **conference proposal system may well be introduced in 2005**, and bears watching. Instead of the flood of faxes, jammed fax machines at the last moment (which resulted in one entire session proposal being lost this year), and massive e-mails with attachments, the new subsite will allow people to write their entire proposals on the web. These will be immediately available to the Program Committee, and the efficient report system will enable the proposals to be printed out, downloaded, and organized expeditiously. It will be possible to

build a data base of volunteer moderators and commentators, and will enable easier integration of single paper proposals. It will, of course, feature multi-accnt use, and there will be an opportunity to include umlauts and other diacritical marks.

The new **online membership system** will enable new members to join, existing members to update their addresses, and will also enable regular and automatic payment by credit card. The reporting system will allow automatic renewal notices, and even reminder notices. This will avoid using the United States Postal Service, reducing costs. We will not save the complete amount of the postage because the credit card companies charge fees, but we will be able to save some costs anyway.

The future holds even more improvements. We already have the opportunity to use the home page as an alert page for important announcements, and will be doing this more and more. We would like your input and ideas.

One major benefit of the web site enhancements is the ability to permit people to serve in GSA posts who do not have extensive secretarial staff and funding support. **With ever-decreasing budget support at universities and colleges, only the extremely highly endowed and funded institutions can afford to put a lot of money into supporting academic associations. The pool of scholars who can be active in such associations is diminished by the penury of their home institutions. Electronic management is the way to go, decreasing the need for support staff and funds, while providing superior service and functions to the membership.** Remember, GSA still is a scholarly association whose telephone line does not connect you with numbered options, and where you get a personal answer when you write an e-mail. With the rise of impersonal communication, and when 75% of GSA's own e-mail is SPAM, you can understand what burdens this means.

I have served as your Executive Director for a long time, and I try not to get behind the modern world in technology, because an association of our kind needs to serve its members, to do so as inexpensively as we can, and to do what it is you want of us with as much personal service as we are able. You have all already discovered that GSA allows far more personal care than most larger organizations. Please help us to keep it that way.

Berlin Program Fellowship Deadline in Fall

Applications for 2005-2006 fellowships to the Berlin Program for German and European Studies will be due in Berlin on Dec. 1, 2004. Since this deadline occurs before the appearance of the next GSA Newsletter, dissertation-level and recently degreed Ph.D. candidates in all German Studies fields, as well as their advisers, should watch the GSA web site for updated information on this very attractive program Further information will be posted as soon as it becomes available. Meanwhile, the current details on the web site provide important

information, which is not likely to change significantly.

As previously announced, GSA is now cooperating actively with the Berlin Program in support of this program.

Other Sections of the GSA Newsletter

In the past, the GSA Newsletter has had sections on grants and meetings of other associations. In general, these have been characterized by either being late, or very incomplete. GSA has not been on a distribution list of most organizations or institutions that have these or, when we were, they arrived too late for an announcement in a GSA Newsletter that only appears twice a year. We were usually either too early or too late for such announcements. There were only three sections of the Newsletter that were under our control: Association News, Computer Information (which seems to be regularly read by the membership), and Occasional Papers (which include archival reports, and some German Studies discussions). Most of the rest can be handled by links on our web site. Why not discontinue the Newsletter altogether, and place all information in it on the web site? Frankly, at the moment, there appears to continue to be a demand for having this information in printed format. Also, this way it is confined to members, who receive it in the mail, and is a private means of communication to members. An alternative suggested has been to send the Newsletter electronically to members but, until there is some resolution of the aggressive SPAM situation, this does not seem to be practical. We can, therefore, continue to send members internal GSA information, and will continue to do so. The slimmer Newsletter is more economical, thus giving it some longevity, and the sections it includes are those which are read.

Do you have a suggestion for the Newsletter in the future? Write me at thegsa@yahoo.com and I will be pleased to learn of it.

Section Two

Computers in Academe

On the Road, Telephones

I have written about PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), and pointed out some time ago that cell telephones were adding PDA features as well as cameras. Thus, the two devices were merging. This development is continuing, and PDAs are getting left on the shelf. How does such a situation concern academics? Early on, I suggested that the rapid technological progress would lead equipment to add features beyond those that ordinary academics need. We would soon be faced with equipment far more advanced than our needs require. This is certainly the case with the latest mobile, or cell, telephones.

First, we found a good use in PDAs as electronic address books. They work, and have replaced the cumbersome paper address books in which we kept copying our addresses each year, and desperately tried to add new names among the filled-up letters of the alphabet or crossed out whoever had moved. The electronic address book, built into the PDA, has been an acceptable technological advance for academics, especially since it could be made compatible with the desktop computer. Since PDAs include calendars, this meant that we could have our scheduling and appointments in the same electronic device as our addresses, and continually modify them. The availability of a calculator was helpful, as were some of the other features. Later, when PDAs began to add music, we found that a less desirable feature – at least as far as our professional needs were concerned. Finally, the PDAs added a camera. The pictures are grainy, not of top quality, and certainly not as good as with a digital camera that stood alone. But, in a pinch, it could be all right.

Cell telephones began to mate with these PDAs, and among the earliest to do so was the Kyocera. Then, they added the other features of the PDAs, and some of the newer ones that included note-taking. One of the more advanced features is the "push to talk" or "walkie-talkie" element, which enables you to connect directly, without dialing, to another cell telephone. Now, many of the cell phones have far more advanced digital cameras, full featured PDA capability, and push to talk. What do we need, and is this overkill?

It is plainly killing off the PDA as a successful device. Businesspeople want to carry only one device, and the cell phone cum PDA is it. Having both is somewhat passé. All right, what does this mean? Well, first off, the cell phone is more easily and often discarded, which means a copying over of addresses on to the next one. But, in turn for that, you get to be able to dial immediately whoever you have looked up in your address list, and do not need to mess with the two instruments. One problem is the screen. The PDA screen was larger than that of

most cell phones, and shows more because it has tended to be higher resolution. Second, the PDA had a longer battery life. When you use your cell phone as a PDA, you are also using the battery. Most of the cell phones cum PDA have a better battery life than earlier models, but this still does limit your use of them. Frankly, I have yet to see an academic use a cell phone as a camera, in preference to using a digital camera that stands alone. So, this is a feature that is less useful to academics.

I am afraid that I prefer the older system – a separate cell phone and PDA. And, a separate digital camera. That makes me very old fashioned, I suppose. The new cell phones will certainly drive PDAs off the market. However, in the meantime, Microsoft and Palm are trying to head off the trend. The reasons that I prefer them separate, at least for now, are several. First, battery life. I don't want my PDA eating into the battery life of my cell phone, or my camera. Second, I think that there are more camera features on a separate camera, and I prefer that. Soon, camera-cell phones will be able to communicate with your computer by Wi-Fi, and we will no longer need the USB connection. That will help. Third, all these additional features make the cell phone bulkier than it otherwise would be. It needs some sort of keyboard, or entry device. Now, there is another feature that might be useful, and that is the e-mail device as part of a cell phone. But, I do not think that academics are needing that particular feature, at least not yet.

Broadband Usage

The swiftest way to get on the internet is broadband. In the United States, broadband access has been limited by government regulations and by the reluctance of providers to supply broadband to potential customers. Instead, many people use the much slower cable modem system. As a result, only 43% of those families on line have broadband access. In Germany, the number is much higher, 69%. Most of western Europe has similar figures to that of Germany, but Hong Kong leads with 92% access. When are we going to start demanding the latest technology in the United States?

Microsoft Office 2004 for the Mac

Spring 2004 will bring a long-awaited major update to Microsoft Office for Mac owners. Look for many new features including something called a Project Center.

Sharp Laptop due to Weigh in at 2 Pounds

Want a portable computer that weighs under a kilo? Maybe later this year, with the new Transmeta processor chip. It only runs for three hours in the standard battery, though, with an add-on that brings it up to nine hours. Still, is it worth the wait? Let's see.

Filemaker Pro 7 is out

PC Magazine tells us that this upgrade is better than Microsoft's Access, and features instant web publishing. Wow! The key word here is usability. This is a program that is most easily usable for the novice, and those who know more can still get more out of it. Designing reports, complex relations, links between fields and multiple fields, make FM 7 a good buy. It lists for \$249, but academic pricing can get it for \$170 or thereabouts, and even less if you buy an upgrade.

iPod

OK, so your teenager has an iPod, with a waist clip and earphones that are so often in the ear that you cannot get a word in edgewise. You don't know much about what it is, except that there is all that music that they listen to all day long, and they download music from web sites and CDs and you can't bear to hear them talking while they're listening. So, it clearly isn't for you, an adult, an academic, a scholar, and besides you aren't sure what it is. Well, get a clue.

The iPod was invented by Mac, but it works with Macs and PCs. It stores music in digital form, and plays back on those earphones. You can store 2500 songs on those things, and even more with the really expensive ones. And, the kids love the mini-iPod which comes in cool colors and is much smaller, though with less storage. So what? Well, that's what I thought until I faced a 16 hour plane trip and dumb-like asked the retailer at the Apple Store if 2500 songs meant that it could also store symphonies and operas. She gave me a bemused smile, the way an adolescent looks at a retired old geezer asking about what a computer does, rolled her eyes, and thought a bit. "Of course," she replied. Aha!!! I bought one.

Well, the iPod is great! I took it home and immediately took a stack of CDs off the shelf, from Bach to Mozart, started shoving them into my computer and transferring the music on to the iPod. It never seemed anywhere near to fill up. Just like my Buick. Then, I went to the Apple Music Store site, where they advertise songs at 99 cents each (less for you Euro-chaps), and found that operas cost more. Still, I tried one, just to see how it worked. Then, I put on the upgraded earphones, stuck the iPod in a carrying case, and strapped it on my belt while I took my morning walk. WOW! The clarity and beauty of the music was wonderful. I took it on America West Airlines for the next test. So great that I fell asleep. OK, I'm a convert. Now, you can go overboard on earphones. Bose has some for half the price of the iPod, but even cheaper earphones work well, and the battery lasts a good while. [that is, if you don't get one of the misconstructured batteries that they put in some of the units, those that die completely in a few weeks. Don't try to change a battery in an iPod. You will void the warranty and fail to do it right. Let a pro do it. Costs \$99 and is worth it.] At any rate, this is a great companion for a trip to research in Europe. Small, convenient, and picks up music everywhere. You can play lists, organize what you hear, and genuinely relax on the train or plane.

The iPod works with Macs or PCs, as I said. It is the hottest seller Mac has, and there are many imitations. So far, reviewers agree that none of them is close to the original. On the other hand, they are expensive. Sort of like my first car. But then, I am an old geezer.

Cable-Free Printing

Well, your laptop is Wi-Fi and you have gone into Starbucks, paid your fee, and sat there happily on the web. You've done it in malls, stores, hotels, and you are having a fine time. You have even Wi-Fi'd your home. It is terrific. Cordless, cableless, and happy. Now, a printer? Well, they are coming. The first ones off the belt are the portables. The Canon i80 and the HP 450wbt are out there with small packages, light weight, and ready activity. Both of them also work with lithium ion batteries in case you don't have an outlet nearby. I just always place myself near a wall outlet in Starbucks. But, you can use the batteries.

Laptops

I am not recommending any laptops this issue. There are simply too many out there, both new and refurbished, and prices go from \$599 up. Depends on what you are looking for. What you do want to look for are matters that are important to you. For example, what are you buying a laptop for? Do you want to use it in the plane, in hotels, more in Europe, where? If you are traveling a lot, and not staying in one place, then weight and size are really important. So are things like what programs you take with you. You need a smaller laptop. If you are tending to be abroad a longer time, you might want one with a bigger screen. This can really be a substitute desktop while you are somewhere else. Generally, you will want something that will interact with wi-fi hot spots. That is, you will want the ability to turn it on somewhere and access the internet without cables or dial-up. Just sit in a hot spot, and go. Of course, most hot spots will charge a fee for this. You'll need a major credit card. Frankly, I've tended to opt for the smaller ones. They carry better. The screens are small, but they are really sharp. Keyboards are not too bad – I've got large hands.

If you have an older laptop, you can use it anyway. And, you can adapt it for wi-fi in any number of ways. They are usually inexpensive. So, this is a good thing to do.

New Desktops

Academics are the most resistant to new, faster means of internet communication because their universities and colleges provide them free dialup service from home and broadband service on Ethernet in the office. Therefore, their homes tend to be in the 20th century, and their offices in the 21st. This dichotomy will probably be solved in the next decade, when homes will be so techno-needy that it will be impossible not to have a private means of rapid access. Software is rapidly leaving the dialup stage and this is a major reason why AOL and Time Warner are in divorce proceedings. AOL merged with and took over Time

Warner, but is sickly itself now. It is harder and harder to get new customers. The emergence of webmail has made it possible to access many different kinds of accounts from remote sites, while traveling, and laggards are finding that dialup offers less and less. GSA continues to use Earthlink in the office, although we now also have cable modem wireless. We will probably migrate away from Earthlink within a year. We have the ability to use several different addresses on our server. The Yahoo address has been good for us, because it is inexpensive, easy to access, and has a good SPAM filter. We might even change it, assuming that the membership would find us in not too long a time.

When buying a new desktop, the first thing that one encounters is the price drop over the past several years. This is a major reason why Apple is struggling. Most computers are PC, and most are made in China, by underpaid people, and we do not know how many of them are children. There are a few parts made elsewhere, but my new Dell is Chinese, pretty much except the processor. You probably want a flat screen, simply because it takes up less space. Get one. They are sharp and clear. Inside, you want a lot of memory because the software programs coming on the market need more and more. Forget the fatware, the cheapie software that comes installed and mostly you won't need. It takes up space on the hard drive. You can get any size hard drive, but a big one is probably a waste unless you have children who play games. If you do, ask them what they want on the computer. You don't need most of it. You want a fast processor, Ethernet port, Wi-Fi possibility, memory, good video, and a flat screen. Don't forget a subscription either to Norton or McAfee anti-virus and a firewall. Well worth it. That is most of what you need except for software, and it is not too expensive these days. For a Mac, you will pay a little more, but surprisingly not much more. The iMac with a fifteen inch flat screen comes with almost as much as a discounted Dell, and does not cost too much more. The bulb-like computer sits on your desk and doesn't cram your legs, and it has all the ports and stuff once you add Airport if you want Wi-Fi. Frankly, I still like the Mac. It does things so effortlessly. Yes, there are fewer programs written for it (and fewer viruses), but most of what you need is really there, if not all of it. I've both a Mac and a PC and find myself gravitating towards the Mac. My Department tried to scare me out of it, refused to buy one (not a problem, they refused to buy me any computer because I had an office with a window and also a secretary), and complained that it couldn't receive ASU announcements. Nonsense. It did. One chap went to the Dean and insisted upon being permitted to have a Mac. Many of the Department's PCs ended up as junk because they were assembled so cheaply. Mac still has a little more quality, I think. I've no idea how long they will last. Like Boeing, which cannot sell the aircraft it makes, because of competition with Airbus, and so has gone into information technology and moved to Chicago, Mac has sold the iPod and it is selling to PC owners and making more money than computers. So, maybe they will do something else, or whatever. Anyway, both are still good machines, and the Laptop Mac is cool and nice. It's about \$1000 plus Airport card and some memory. Out of the box, it still runs great without

installation issues. I like Fujitsu laptops for the Windows crowd, but MacOS X is just fine. So, when you are headed into desktop direction, you can do most anything with a Mac, too, and the small additional cost should not deter you. Depends upon what other programs you want that Windows has and Mac doesn't.

