

From the Assistant Editor

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It seems to me that my job as Director of SMU's Foreign Language Learning Center changes just about every time somebody comes through my door. Sometimes I feel as though I wear so many different hats that I could support the global millinery trade all by myself. Sometimes, I simply feel like the Mad Hatter (and many of you reading this will nod and smile, either because you feel that way too, or because you have experienced first-hand more than a few of my zany moments).

One of the comforts IALL brings me is knowing I'm not the only language technology professional with a hat problem. Going between a meeting with the dean and one with my courseware development team, I get waylaid by a colleague whose keyboard has come unplugged, and then by my student tech who asks about trouble-shooting a printer problem. Having a multi-faceted job goes with the territory. Inhabiting the territory cheerfully is made every so much easier for me knowing that you are virtually in reach, ready to brainstorm, commiserate and validate. IALL meets a need for a lot of us, I think, that doesn't get met any other way. I am very grateful for your support.

"Sometimes I feel as though I wear so many different hats that I could support the global millinery trade all by myself."

Working on the *Journal* connects me with writers and readers in a very real sense. Reading your manuscripts, nagging at you for columns (while trying to find the time to write my own), shepherding the finished product through the mailing process to you - these are the things that remind me all along the way that the *Journal* represents a team process in which many of you participate. I like being a part of that process, and I get way more out of it than I put into it.

I grew up in the newspaper business, and I still love the smell of newly-printed pages. As much as I am a creature of the Web, there's something about the heft of a *Journal* in my hand that grounds me in reality. Umm... reality? Oh, yes. Just let me get one of my hats and I'll be right with you. I think Pete is waiting for a column.■

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