

From the Editor-in-Chief

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Gearing up and winding down

The IALLT Journal is poised to explore some new directions in the coming year – thanks to the hard work of Marlene Johnshoy, Bruno Browning and Barbara Sawhill, past issues of the Journal are beginning to become available online. This move will allow us to provide our membership with (eventually) the entire back catalogue of the Journal, making “oldies but goodies” accessible to those of us who haven’t been in the organization since the days of NALLD. My sincere thanks to the above-named folks in this effort.

Another new effort involves the publication of IALLT Journal special issues: Jörg Waltje and I will be working to bring you an issue with articles and essays on the future of the language resource center in the current era of publisher-created and –distributed ancillary materials, budget cuts, networked access to materials, campus “internationalization” and administrative and academic mergers. Barbara Sawhill, wearing her associate editor hat, and I will be co-editing a volume on technological resources and curricular design innovations for disabled learners of second languages. As always, we encourage submissions from our readership, and look forward to publishing your work, whether in the form of feature articles or Lab Notes.

In this issue, we’re pleased to offer our readership a sneak preview of some of the excellent presentations to attend at FLEAT5 in Provo. The Journal has gathered extended abstracts from those conference submissions judged to be among the best received – all finalists for the conference plenaries. These, along with abstract of the Henderson plenary winner, are included in this issue. We hope they’ll serve to whet your interest in attending FLEAT5, and in getting to hear the full version of these papers when they’re presented. This issue’s feature article comes to us from the University of Victoria, where Catherine Caws is working on a French learning object repository, FLORE:

her pilot study offers a look at student perspectives on the use of such repositories in instruction, and suggests that in terms of Web searches, more choice may not always serve the learner's needs effectively. Judi Franz outlines the organizational structure her Humanities Instructional Resource Center (HIRC) at UC Irvine uses to provide an extensive network of assistance to faculty across a number of disciplines – this may well be a model of operations with resonance for many of us who are being asked to consider offering cross-disciplinary support as an extension of our original missions. Karl Fisher provides a look at Tascam's CC-222 CD/audiocassette recorder as a means of transferring our audiocassette collections to a more flexible medium.

Judy Shoaf, in her column on Intellectual Property, provides yet another invaluable look at copyright and intellectual property issues, discussing the gray area of using region-free DVD players for foreign titles. Michael Shaughnessy, in his Authentic Materials column, offers an overview of online image and media archives for L2 instruction. We're delighted to have their input and expertise in the Journal, and are grateful for their thoughtful contributions.

Finally, the "winding down" bit – it's been stimulating, interesting, fun and only occasionally aggravating being the Editor-in-Chief of the IALLT Journal for the past 3 and a half years. I've had the opportunity to read some wonderful work by you, and other colleagues in the fields of language technology, second language acquisition theory, and pedagogy. After publication of our special issues, which should get us through Volume 38, Number 2, and to April 2006, I'm going to step down as Editor-in-Chief. Four-plus years seems to be a longish tenure in this post, and I'll look forward to hearing from those of you in the profession that are interested in taking up the reins of the Journal, and making it a better service to our readership. My reason for announcing this decision as early as possible is to give those of you interested in the position the chance to work on the editing of the Journal – to learn the process of getting this particular publication into the hands of our members. As you may be aware, we're losing the valuable services of one of our Associate Editors ...

I'll have more to say on the direction that the Journal has taken and might take in future at FLEAT. I hope that you'll add your voice to the discussion on the shape of the Journal, since it's fundamentally your publication. My e-mail address is Andrew_Ross@brown.edu – drop me a line to volunteer or to comment on the Journal. ♦