

FROM THE EDITOR

Read Gilgen

Tracks. A word associated with many things, but particularly with language learning technologies. We find tracks on audio tapes, tracks on phono or video disc, and tracks on microcomputer diskette. Receiving dishes also track satellites. We also associate tracks with paths or directions. Deep tracks are sometimes referred to as traditions, but can also get to be ruts. Sometimes these help us keep on track, but at other times it can keep us from getting on the right track.

As the new editor of *The IALL Journal* I am mindful of the tracks that have been laid down before me. I appreciate those who made tracks where none existed, making it easier for all of us to keep moving forward (I think particularly of my own predecessor, Tom Goldsworthy who was the *NALLD Journal's* first editor). Also those who maintained the tracks, sometimes under adverse conditions.

Speaking of adverse conditions, special thanks are in order to Sue Otto and Jim Pusack of the University of Iowa for gathering, reviewing and organizing the articles for this special feature edition on Video in the Classroom.

Although many valuable tracks have already been laid down, I recognize the need to explore new tracks, to make it easier for others of our organization to follow. Having just searched for (and found) that special breed of individual who has both technical expertise and foreign language acumen, I am well aware that there is no degree program for what we do. Hence much of the training comes on the job, and through our professional organization.

You will notice several changes both in format and content of *The IALL Journal*, beginning with the title. Some changes will be the

result of cost-saving measures, while others simply reflect my particular editing focus and style. Not all the changes will take place at once, although you will notice some differences immediately. In fact, in this first issue there will be relatively little beyond the articles so ably organized and edited by Sue and Jim. But in the coming issues you should see:

- A message from the president of IALL. This journal is by and for IALL, and the leaders of the organization should be heard from.
- In addition to the customary feature articles (reviewed by our peers), there will also be plenty of opportunity for shorter and less formal notes ("Lab Notes")
- Several regular columns: Tech Talk (technical questions and answers), Regional Perspectives (news and views from the regional organizations), Conference Reports (summaries and highlights by those who attended), Reviews (only of hardware and software specific to language learning labs) and probably a column where we can hear from and about vendors with whom we deal.
- And finally, a calendar of events, classified ads, membership application, advertising rates, and other information that will help you keep in touch professionally.

IALL and *The IALL Journal* celebrate their 25th anniversary this year. A quick glance backwards reveals to what extent the tracks have changed over the years. Since the same is expected for the coming years, we commit ourselves to helping you understand the nature of those changes and the new tracks you will want to follow.

Finally, we want to hear from you. Whether you want to prepare a complete article, or have a tip you'd like to share, or if you just want to tell us what you like, don't like, or

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would prefer to see changed, we hope you will communicate with us. Likewise, if you have desires to serve your colleagues by being involved in the journal (editing, reviewing, etc.), please let us know.

Make tracks...!