

FROM THE (MANAGING) EDITOR

A recent "Nova" episode discussed *visual agnosia*, a neurological disorder in which a person loses his/her ability to recognize objects or faces for what they are, and reduces those objects or faces to a number of seemingly unrelated parts. I had read about this earlier in Oliver Sacks' book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat*, (HarperPerennial: New York, 1990), and was intrigued. The symptoms of this disorder offer a different way of seeing the world, by turning normal perception on its head and breaking down normal mental representations and connections into discrete elements.

Why bring this up? January is traditionally the month for self-examination, for looking at all the things we do, trying to make sense of them, and making earnest resolutions to improve on them. The description of the man who mistook his wife for a hat inspired me to sit down and list my activities, to examine the connection between those activities and long range objectives, and to try to reassemble those activities into a coherent whole. The trouble is, we do so many different things that it is easy to get caught up in these tasks and to lose sight of the reason we are here in the first place. The generalist nature of our jobs means that we are expected to be proficient, even expert, in an entire range of activities.

From development of multimedia applications, to integrating video into the curriculum, to hiring and keeping good employees, to obtaining grant funding, to basic accounting, we need to be good at it all.

(That was the resolution part of this spiel.) The reality is that we can't do it alone. We rely on our colleagues, our professional organizations, and our friends to get the job done. IALL publications and LLTI provide timely and useful information on a variety of topics of interest to our profession and encourage a sense of community among members. Contributing to *The IALL Journal* or doing a conference presentation is a way of getting feedback on the job you're doing. By articulating your ideas and putting them "out there," you not only share your expertise with the group, but clarify the connections and issues for yourself. Thank you to all who have stuck their necks out and submitted material; and to the rest of you, get on it!

This issue is full of good reading: practical articles with something for everyone. Ruth Trometer writes about her lab design in the context of educational objectives, and a group of authors discuss cooperation between their labs and other campus media units. Two hot subjects—multimedia and multicultural studies—are addressed in an

From the Editor

article about a multicultural multimedia pilot project at Carnegie Mellon. Read Gilgen and Bruno Browning provide insight into improving interpersonal skills in the lab in their article entitled "Dealing With Difficult People." Kathleen Ford has pulled together perspectives from several labs on automated circulation and tracking systems. The Network Update column features French and Latin American electronic discussion groups, and provides information on obtaining unlimited free Internet access to users in the domestic U.S. In the Satellite Footprint column Marc Siskin brings us up to date on TELSTAR 401, and Pete Smith describes satellite shortwave radio. David Herren keeps us hopping with his piece on WorldScript, a new element of the Macintosh operating system of particular interest to those who do word processing in languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian. Finally, there were a few

errors in the Membership Directory published in the last issue; these are corrected on page 68 of this issue.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we should take advantage of the wealth of knowledge offered by IALL members (and their willingness to share it) on all the various aspects of our jobs. But first, let's sit down and look again at what we do and why we're doing it. Then we can put the pieces together and "see" ourselves in a whole new light.

Have a great year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kelly Nelson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Have a great year!".