Dear VASTA Members:

This is the sixth and final letter I will write as VASTA President for our newsletter. This August I will preside over my final board meeting in San Diego. Does the breakneck pace of these 2 years seem as quick to you as to me?

I must admit to being ready to turn over VASTA's reins to President-elect Kate Ufema. I doubt that any of our organization’s presidents left without breathing sighs of relief. The clerical aspects of the job have increased in the last few months, as have email communications. It was helpful several months ago to ask Kate Ufema to take over as eminence grise on Vastavox. I have lately asked Kate to take over a few more duties, and I think future presidents will need to actively cultivate the art of delegation.

There is much for VASTA to look forward to. We are celebrating two grants (totaling $2500) recently received from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, one to support putting the VASTA Combined Bibliography online and another to support the publication of our journal. Thanks to Kate Ufema and those who put the applications together. We are in the process of applying for more grant monies, and we have made the prudent decision to publish the journal (or book or serial monograph, as Applause Books likes to think of it) every other year. This rhythm takes the world’s weight off the shoulders of our production staff and may lead to an even finer product.

In a recent appeal I asked, via Vastavox, for “VASTA success stories.” It is truly heartwarming to read the replies, which are hard and fast evidence of the services and advocacy this beloved consortium of thinkers, feelers and doers has provided to practitioners of our discipline. It seems clear to me that one of my tasks as past-president will be to write an article or small volume which devines and preserves VASTA's history of advocacy and connectedness. What a labor of love it will be.

Having just returned from University/Resident Theatre Association auditions in Chicago, I am reminded of how CRUCIAL our work remains. So many would-be, self-styled, instinctively gifted actors are simply unable to express inner life. They strangle, gasp, huff, blast, letting white noise (and black and gray noise) stand in for the flowing, resonant, articulate, passionate, syncopated, full-color spectrum of the spoken word. I have long felt that sentient human beings are rendered MORE articulate by their problems and conflicts, rather than less. At least in the theatre. Would that this were universally true in life. Then, of course, we would find ourselves out of a job!

For my sometimes-lacking organizational skills, missed