**President’s Letter**

Dear VASTA Members,

As VASTA’s President, it is an honor to address you, yet again, and to bring you up to date.

First, let it be known (for those of you who did not attend), that our New York Conference was strong, vital, and stimulating. You shall read more about it in this issue. Thank you Judylee Vivier and Barbara Adrian for making NYC affordable, convenient, and welcoming for us all.

New members and old members who did not attend the conference, we missed you. Our conferences are the ‘personal’ lifeblood of our organization. There is simply no substitute for coming together with your national and global colleagues, playing, sharing ideas, problems, wishes and dreams, getting answers to some of those problematic questions, and looking into the eyes of those who love and do what you do every day. It’s wonderful to meet your vocal allies. So please consider joining us in the future.

In my last Newsletter address, I mentioned several works-in-progress and visions for the future. And now, after our August Board meeting, I have much to relate regarding all of the above.

With respect to conferences, it is official. Our 2004 VASTA conference will piggyback with the Voice Foundation Symposium in Philadelphia in early June. For those of you who will be attending the August ATHE conference in Toronto as well, VASTA presentations will remain part of that conference as always. There will also be VASTA member presentations at both the Voice Symposium and at the VASTA conference itself. For these, you should have already received the details and applications forms in your snail mail. If not, check the websites: [www.vasta.org](http://www.vasta.org) and [www.voicefoundation.org](http://www.voicefoundation.org).

Beyond 2004, we are now certain that our 2005 conference will be in Scotland in mid-August. Lise Olson will be our Conference Planner. So save your pennies and write your travel grants. We’ll be linking with the Edinburgh Festival!

Additionally, I am thrilled to announce that our VASTA Bibliography will soon be on line for all to use. Thanks to a grant from ATHE, Jeff Morrison has been able to put all this together for us. For those who are unfamiliar with this resource, it is invaluable. So check the VASTA website (<www.vasta.org>) frequently in mid-to-late November for the link to the Bibliography. Thank you Jeff Morrison!

Again, those of you not at the conference, the third edition of VASTA’s *Voice and Speech Review* is out. If you haven’t already, you should be receiving yours in the mail soon. Rocco Dal Vera, the journal’s Father and Editor and Chief, we HAIL! your magnificent achievement. Thank You. Mandy Rees, our new Editor and Chief.

(continued next page)
BREATHE! We are all with you, and so grateful for your willingness to take on this enormous task. Onward . . .

My next announcement is HUGE! During our August Board meeting, we discovered that we have successfully addressed/accomplished all the major tasks set forth in our VASTA Vision Goals 2005.

Back in November 1998, after a two-day intensive retreat led by a professional facilitator, the retreat participants summed up VASTA's future seven-year charge in the following catch phrase — **IF we ACT!**

I = international, development and expansion of international relationships.
- This prompted our 2000 International Conference held at George Washington Univ. outside DC, and our Scotland conference for 2005.

F = finance, finding the means to accomplish our dreams through fund raising and endowment.
- Two years ago we hired a professional fund-raiser who continues to work with us.
- Last year we received two separate grants from ATHE, one to help fund our journal, and one to facilitate our on-line Bibliography.
- And last October we initiated the investment stage in the establishment of our new VASTA Endowment Fund.

A = advocacy, active outreach to professional communities; persistent near-reach to directors and department chairs; nurturing in-reach to members regarding quality of their professional lives.
- Thanks to Barry Kur and his persistent leadership of the Advocacy Committee, we now have an on-line document entitled “How to Use a Vocal Coach”. This document was written by Nancy Houfek, with Lynn Watson and Linda de Vries, to help educate directors and other interested parties about what we do and what we have to offer.
- Our new VASTA bookmarks are out, advertising our organization, quoting Willie himself!
- Karen Ryker has recently revised VASTA’s “Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure” which now appear on our website.
- Any Department Chair who advertises a voice and speech position in the trades receives a formal letter from VASTA’s immediate Past President outlining our services and reference publications for their use in both hiring and promoting.
- Our 2004 conference will link with the Voice Foundation and seek to form an ongoing relationship between our two organizations. And we are in early communications with both ASHA and NAST with similar goals in mind.
- Last year Yolanda Henan-Ackah M.D. became VASTA’s on-line medical advisor. A free service!
- And VASTAVOX continues to be a channel of professional well-being and health for our members through the active on-line explanations, advice, and discussions.

C = communication, inaugurating The Voice and Speech Review, and mobilizing technology through vasta.org, VASTAVOX, and a dialects-on-line.
- In 2000, Rocco Dal Vera did, indeed, birth our journal.
- Thanks to our ever-efficient, wonderful webmaster — Eric Armstrong — VASTA’s website has become a resource to behold; and a special thanks to Amy Stoller for her wonderful “internet resource” page that appears on the site. Check it out! It’s a wealth.
- Again, Dudley Knight’s VASTAVOX continues to facilitate our collegiality, our teaching needs, and our profession.
Members — I could go on and on with additional accomplishments and works-in-progress. What are mentioned above are but isolated highlights. Instead, I’ll save some for . . . next time!

As a long-time servant of VASTA, I am both grateful and excited.

THANK YOU ALL.

Stayed tuned . . .!

Your President,
Kate Ufema

And all this has come to pass in only the last five years!

Which means that, though many of these projects are on-going, VASTA has completed its charge almost two years ahead of schedule! As a result, we are ready for our next (second) formal Retreat Planning Session.

This, quite frankly, is amazing to me; and has all occurred through the hard and persistent work of many, many dedicated VASTA members. So please forgive that I have not mention everyone’s name above. You know who you are, and how important your work is to this organization. Simply know that, thanks to the addition of your piece of the puzzle, VASTA is ready to move forward, yet again, into a new and exciting planning stage, as it schedules its next retreat for the Fall of 2004.

• And Paul Meier’s IDEA has brought such accessibility and ease to our dialect lives.
  
  T = training, creating graduate degree programs, continuing education for the membership, and educational resources for voice users.

• To date there are three US graduate degree programs established specifically for the theatrical voice and speech trainer, when in 1998 there were none — Northwestern University in Chicago, Harvard University at Cambridge, and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. They offer MA, MFA, and an MFA in Pedagogy degrees respectively. Thank you Linda Gates, Nancy Houfek, and Janet Rodgers for making these programs available. Your degree programs have helped to legitimize our profession in the academic world. And many of our VASTA members continue to offer workshops and intensives all over the country for our extended knowledge and skill.

• Our on-line Bibliography will soon be a major, ever-expanding resource.

• And thanks to Mandy Rees, VASTA has an active Mentoring Program, now managed by Ginny Kopf.

Call for ATHE 2004 program proposals:

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