

JALT MILESTONES

By Tom Robb

Two events this month, the installation of JALT's fourth president and the debut of a new co-editorship of *The Language Teacher*, mark a significant turning point in JALT's history. It seems fitting at this point in time to take a brief look at the past to see where we have come from as we set our sights toward the future.

Organizational growth can be categorized in two basic ways, quantitative and qualitative. Growth in membership or the accretion of chapters, in JALT's case, represents quantitative growth; whereas new policies, programs and services to the membership enhance the quality of the organization. Balanced growth in both aspects is essential, and a look at the past 13 years of JALT's history shows that both types of growth have taken place.

1975 – A seminar organized by Bill Harshbarger, Principal of the Language Institute of Japan, attracted nearly 40 teachers. Some, including Sharon Bode and Tom Pendergast, returned to the Kansai area wishing for more opportunities to talk with other teaching professionals.

1976 – Informal sessions at Sharon's home gave way to public meetings in Osaka. "KALT" (Kansai Association of Language Teachers) was the name chosen for the group. Shao Li Kuo from Educational Solutions gave a seminar on the Silent Way in Kyoto, followed by our "second conference" which was held at the Kyoto YMCA. The first *KALT Newsletter* appeared under the editorship of Nancy Nakanishi Hildebrandt.

1977 – Members of KALT formed similar organizations in Kanto (KALT) and Tokai (TALT). The three planned our third conference which was held up in the mountains outside Nagoya. An umbrella organization, "JALT," was born which was recognized as the first Asian affiliate of TESOL. JALT began computerization of its membership list.

1978 – Kanto A.L.T. published its own newsletter. The *KALT Newsletter* (Kansai) was renamed the *JALT Newsletter*. The Chugoku (Hiroshima) and Nishinippon (Fukuoka) chapters were recognized.

1979 – The *JALT Newsletter* went monthly. The first "Research and Materials Development Grant" was awarded. The inaugural issue of the *JALT Journal* was published. Our first three-day conference was held at Doshisha University, Kyoto. The Tohoku (Sendai) and Shikoku

(Takamatsu) chapters were recognized. Membership grew to over 1,000.

1980 – The East Kansai (Kyoto), Okinawa and Hokkaido chapters were recognized. JALT participated in the "Kaizenkon" Roundtable for the Improvement of English Education. TESOL Executive Director Jim Alatis and Joan Morley came to JALT '80 as TESOL representatives.

1981 – The first Summer Seminar was held in Nagoya. The conference name was changed to "JALT International Conference on Language Teaching/Learning." The Nagasaki chapter was recognized. The JALT central office was established in Kyoto, and a microcomputer was installed. We started accepting payment in yen for TESOL memberships.

1982 – The first "Kigyonai Seminar" for in-company language training program administrators and staff took place.

1983 – The Hamamatsu, Kobe and Okayama chapters were recognized. The first Discourse Analysis Seminar was held in Kyoto.

1984 – The *JALT Newsletter* changed its name and *The Language Teacher* was born. *JALT Journal* went semi-annual. The Yokohama and Matsuyama chapters were recognized. Membership topped 2,000. The JALT central office moved into the Kyoto English Center. Services to chapters, such as preparation and mailing of postcards, were added. Yohan started distribution of *The Language Teacher* to bookstores.

1985 – *TEFL in Japan* 10th anniversary volume was published. JALT was recognized as the Japan branch of IATEFL. The Yamagata, Ibaraki, Omiya, Chiba, Shizuoka and Tokushima chapters were recognized.

1986 – The second Discourse Analysis Seminar was held. JALT Subscription Service was inaugurated allowing members to order overseas journals at low rates with payment in yen. The Gumma chapter was recognized.

1987 – The first Testing Conference was held at Tsukuba. The Morioka, West Tokyo, Niigata, Kanazawa, Fukui, Nagano, Suwa and Toyohashi chapters were recognized. Membership exceeded 3,000.

1988 – 1988 is your year. Read the officers' reports in this issue and give them your ideas.