From the chairperson

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As I gather this issue, along with the 1994 Directory, to go to the Ohio State University Printing Facility it seems like a such a familiar routine for me now. Not so three years ago when I was hurriedly trying out different cover designs and asking colleagues for reactions to them.

Being the chairperson and publisher for CEAL over the past three years has been a very rewarding experience for me. In particular, the opportunity to work with Ed Martinique has been one of the highlights of my term. He has a sense of devotion to CEAL which is contagious, a capacity for hard work which is inspiring, and a “can-do” attitude which achieves outstanding results. With Ed as Editor we have seen a continuing maturation of the Bulletin. I have heard many of you comment positively on the direction that the Bulletin has taken under his leadership. It is marvelous how much he has achieved. For me it has been a great experience to work with Ed and be a part of the process that brings each issue to you -- to catch the excitement as, time after time, the issues took shape and finally reached me for printing and mailing to subscribers.

The February issue, by tradition, carries the annual CEAL survey results (see pp. 26 - 35). This year the list of reporting libraries is longer that we have seen in recent years, owing to the hard work of this year’s Task Force on CEAL Statistics which was chaired by Reiko Yoshimura (Freer/Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution) and included Ed Martinique (North Carolina), Zhijia Shen (Colorado) and Peter X.P. Zhou (Iowa). This team produced a new form for the collection of data and divided up their work in a very effective way to solicit participation in a timely manner by all of us. As one who received a firm but gentle nudge which propelled me to put aside my normal tendency to procrastination, I can testify to the effectiveness of their methods. I have asked Reiko and her task force members to review the work that they did and bring recommendations to the upcoming CEAL meeting. The collection of statistics is one of the most successful traditions of our organization. However, there may be ways in which we can improve in the future. For the present, though, this task force deserves our thanks for a job well done!

(Note: Some last minute addenda to the statistics tables can be found on page 35.)

The format of the Plenary Session at this year’s annual meeting will be a little different from that of past years. During the first hour we will all gather for some reports. For the second hour we will divide into five groups which will discuss various topics. Each group will report back to the assembled whole during the final hour. My hope is to encourage discussion about a variety of topics of importance to CEAL which need our attention at this time. By dividing up in this way we can cover a wider range of topics than we could if we attempted to discuss them all as a large group. Here is a list showing the way the topics are shaping up at this time:

• CEAL’s mission, procedures (by-laws) and ongoing revisions, fund-raising, meeting format, etc.

• CEAL’s external role, relationship to AAS, international subscribers/members, contacts with libraries in Asia, relationship to other similar organizations, etc.

• CEAL and public services: bibliographic instruction, interlibrary loan, reference services, database searching, inclusion of /communication with teaching faculty, etc.

• CEAL’s publications: Bulletin, Directory, annual statistical survey, brochure (?), eastlib, subcommittee publications, etc.
• CEAL and the ARL Foreign Acquisitions Study, AAU Research Libraries Project, and other studies, including the reports generated by CEAL’s task forces for the ARL study

In each case my hope is that the discussion groups will review the CEAL organizational structure to see if it is appropriate to meet the challenges of the future in the particular area and make recommendations. (For example, do we need a standing by-laws/procedures committee, a fund-raising committee, an international relations committee, a public services subcommittee, etc?; how should the annual statistics be collected and maintained?; does eastlib need to be archived?; what kind of follow-up is needed for the recommendations/findings of the ARL/AAU studies? and so on.) I have suggested these topics because they have commanded my attention during the past three years. I do not want to leave initiatives which were begun during my term dangling without resolution. Please help me by coming ready with your ideas about how to shape our organization so that it can help us prepare effectively to meet the challenges facing us and our libraries.

One obvious problem will be to decide which group to join. I suggest joining the area in which you have some interest in future participation. If there is more than one such group, then just make a choice. The assembled group will later discuss all recommendations as a whole. Breaking into smaller groups will just permit us to have better discussions than we can as a big group. My hope is that the groups will all be about the same size because all are important. Since the issue of CEAL’s name is of general interest, I will ask each group to consider it, rather than assign it to any one particular group.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the meeting in Boston,