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Message from the President

As I near the end of my tenure as president of IATC, I thought it would be good to reflect a bit on what this organization has been over the past few years and what it wants to be. I've seen changes in a number of areas that testify to our changing focus and mission.

When I first became involved with IATC in the late 1990s, it was primarily an organization of American and British linguists who studied Czech and taught the Czech language. Its founders were well-known scholars in our field like Charles Townsend, Laura Janda, David Short and Mako Fidler. They were later joined by the likes of Susan Kresin who has greatly expanded the role that language teaching plays in our profile, and other contributors like Mila Saskova-Pierce have contributed news from the heritage communities. The occasional literary scholar in the person of Jiří Stejskal or Michael Heim has always graced the pages of CLN, but it wasn't until the 21st century that literary scholars began to play a larger role, as Hana Píchová took over as Executive Officer and Craig Cravens began so capably filling the pages of our newsletter with Cimrmaniana. This expansion has made us an organization more widely reflective of the Czech studies community, which can only be a good thing.

IATC has always been at heart a North American organization and our attempts to be "international" have not always borne fruit. We have a number of members in other countries, but our presence in the Czech Republic has not been a strong one, partly for simple administrative reasons (the difficulty of collecting and spending dues in a foreign currency). Now, thanks to the existence of a home-grown organization in that country dedicated to the teaching of Czech as a foreign language, there are new ways for us to engage with the Czech Bohemistics community there and to cooperate with them, and we are hoping to pursue these possibilities further.

In the future, I'd hope to see more active support from a broader spectrum of teachers of Czech, covering the range of our remit in language, literature, linguistics and culture. For the newsletter, we welcome articles of either a scholarly or practical nature. When it comes to the organization as a whole, there is always an opportunity to get involved. We have plenty of pressing tasks just waiting for a willing volunteer, from the mundane but crucial (membership drives) to the lucrative (grant applications) to the creative (editing and special projects). A more active membership will help us to thrive and will hopefully redound to the benefit of the field as a whole.

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