

Editorial: On to Boston

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This issue features what has been since 1976 an annual offering: a record containing original listening material for classroom use, together with a printed transcript, linguistic and cultural notes, maps, and such related information as we hope will be useful to teacher and students. This year's special section is a direct response to the expressed wishes of a number of readers. When asked what kinds of visuals and subjects they would like us to include, the majority expressed a desire for maps, and city maps rank high on the list. "Tell us about other American cities," they say, "as you did about Washington" (which was featured just five years ago).

We select articles for this journal with an eye to (among other things) a geographic, linguistic, and cultural balance, *internationally*. So it seems fitting to strive for a geographic, linguistic, and cultural balance *nationally* in the places and people chosen for our annual insert. The 1988 issue featured a visit to Washington by plane; in 1990 some train travelers went from Chicago to Pasadena; 1991 saw riverboats ply the Mississippi River to New Orleans; and in 1992, cowboys on horseback drove longhorn cattle from Texas to Kansas. So how about Boston by automobile? Other interesting cities—New York, San Francisco, and San Antonio among them—have had least "cameo" roles in other issues.

Also, we believe in the well-known advice to writers: it is better to write about something you know from experience. Like the characters we created, we, too, have traveled to Washington by plane, have taken a train trip from Chicago to Pasadena, and, on numerous occasions, have driven to Boston and other parts of New England from New York State. (Admittedly, the closest we ever got to a cattle drive was attending a rodeo in Texas.)

The natural beauty of the New England coastline and wooded hillsides beckons and rewards the visitor at all seasons of the year. The region is rich also in history and literature, in arts and letters and intellectual culture. Boston itself, with its ethnically and culturally diverse population, has most of the problems, as well as benefits, of big cities everywhere. But the New England character is most clearly seen in the less metropolitan areas. There the word *Yankee* takes on a special significance quite different from its broader meaning of simply a United States citizen. The particular character of the people, rock-solid as their surroundings, has endured through centuries of change, growth, and environmental strains. To savor something of the real New England, only hinted at in our pages, the listener or reader will have to add the magic ingredient of imagination (all the more precious in today's video-saturated world).

For readers less interested, or altogether uninterested, in the special listening/reading material, this issue contains a considerable amount of food for thought—18 articles in all—for EFL teachers in a variety of situations and circumstance, and reflecting, to a degree, the linguistic, geographic, and cultural balance we hope for.