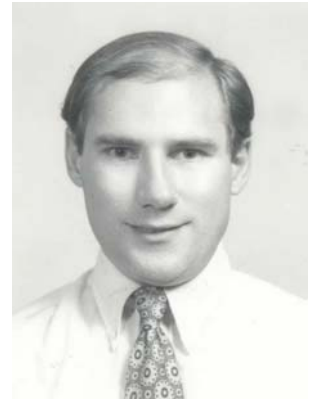


John Fleischauer
(1982~85, 86~88)
LIOJ Director: 1986~88

I was a teacher in the Business Program from 1982 to 1985 while Lance was director. I was living in Thailand when Derald invited me to come back as a temporary replacement teacher for one month. Totally unexpectedly, while I was there, a number of issues between the staff and Derald came to a head. The upshot of all this was that Derald resigned and I was asked to become director.



When I took over, I wanted first and foremost to return to the dynamism and creativity which seemed to be a hallmark of LIOJ during my teaching days. To set the tone, we made a number of cosmetic changes (new carpeting, etc.) to the building. I met with all the teachers individually and outlined my own vision of LIOJ. In particular, I wanted to get back to some of the fundamental aspects of the school, enhancing its "cross cultural" nature. Two new positions were established: assistants to the academic director. The academic director (Francis Bailey) the new assistants (Kevin McClure and Kathy Mastin), and I went on a "retreat" where we wrote a "philosophy" for the program which basically provided an overriding blueprint for where we would be going with me as director. This philosophy was added to the "LIOJ Handbook." This document had been begun under Derald and was completed with additional material coming out of our discussions during the retreat.

At this point LIOJ was doing very well financially, not only the Business Program, but also the Community Program. One of my goals was to expand our role in the Odawara community. A key aspect of this was to increase the full time Community teachers from one to three, allowing us to add a number of new programs, such as instruction in French, increased programs for schoolchildren, and special activities like the Community Program cocktail party. A highlight of our increased presence in community affairs was our participation in the "Samurai Parade" through the streets of Odawara. I'm proud to say all teachers participated in this event despite the fact that it rained the whole day. At this time, the Community Program was bringing in a good deal of income to LIOJ. Classes were full and there was a good deal of continuity in enrollments. The new supervisor (Lauren) worked hard to create a generalized curriculum for the program so that we would have a basis for placing students and so that teachers would have more support in designing lessons. Anyway, the expansion of the Community Program should be noted as a major activity during my time as director.

As for the Business Program, at this time, the LIOJ program had a very good reputation and we were generally able to offer five classes throughout my time as director. The Japanese economy was booming, Japanese companies were expanding their involvement in the American economy, and they needed to train a great many more middle managers for assignments in offices in the United States and Europe. While I continued to spend a fair amount of my time on recruiting and public relations, a bigger issue was that our waiting lists were expanding and some of our most loyal clients were being shut out. We attempted to ameliorate this somewhat by establishing a special "short-term" program (I believe it was two weeks) for our long-term customers.

This was a boom time for Japan and LIOJ. The value of the Japanese currency consistently increased, with one result that as imports became less costly in "yen" terms, the cost of living actually went down. This enabled us to make a proposal which tried to address one of the most prevalent of teacher complaints (believe it or not), the requirement that teachers take lunch with students. It is hard to describe the hard feelings that surrounded this aspect of the Business Program teacher's required responsibilities. From the time I was a teacher, this had been a big issue. We proposed making a number of adjustments in this area, including allowing teachers to bring bag lunches, to reducing the required number of meals teachers needed to attend. Moreover, we proposed to the faculty that instead of a cost-of-living adjustment in salary the school subsidize the lunches that teachers were required to attend.

Under Lance, the Business Program had become more structured and based firmly on sound instructional approaches emphasizing a notional/functional curriculum and an business component held in morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. The "business" portion of the program had always met for fewer minutes per week than the other programs due to the need to make rooms available to the Community Program in the evening. Nobu and I spent a good deal of time reviewing the Business Program schedule trying to find ways to improve it and make it more equitable for all teachers. We adjusted the program so that the instruction time for the three modes of the program became more even. We made changes in the first day schedule to enhance the effectiveness of our placement procedures, having students meet for informal "chat" with the faculty prior to placement. I should emphasize, however, that the instructional component (the curriculum and materials) of the Business Program were very solid. We wanted to keep the curriculum but work to make improvements in the scheduling.

Reflecting my own interests and what I saw as the reality of the assignments of our students to places all over the world, I wanted to make LIOJ more of an "international" training center. Under Lance, teachers from Thailand and Korea had come to participate in our Summer Workshop and college students had come to participate in the businessmen's program. I suggested that we bring in persons from other countries to participate in our Business Program as adjunct members of our staff. This program enabled us to have teachers from Thailand and from the People's Republic of China as working members of our faculty, enhancing the cross-cultural experience of both our students and our faculty. We made similar efforts in our Summer Workshop, enabling teachers to join us from India and Mexico in addition to participants from Thailand and Korea. Additionally, we made it possible for the academic director to attend such programs as Thai TESOL. A less successful effort involved hiring a German national to join our faculty as an official member of our staff. It took us a great deal of time and effort to persuade the Ministry to grant this person a visa. Although we successfully made our case, the teacher in question could not wait and took a job elsewhere. Another effort which did not prove successful was an attempt to have businesspeople from Thai companies come and study at LIOJ. I was unable to convince Thais that there was any particular value in studying English in Japan as opposed to Thailand or the US.

Somewhat related to our efforts to "internationalize" the program was our outreach program to the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management. Representatives of the school came to us and we proposed a program of language

instruction based on political themes. This program involved two teachers who went to the school and taught with specially designed materials.

The Summer Workshop continued to have record enrollments throughout the time I was director. This reflects not only the successes under previous directors (many teachers came back every year), but also our efforts to make improvements on the program each year. I tried hard to make the Workshop one that would provide useful and practical activities to all participants. Again, the basic program was very sound. Our efforts were to make the Workshop more "user friendly" and collegial.

I was fortunate to be director of LIOJ at a time when the Japanese economy was surging and the need for English language training was perhaps at its height. When I left LIOJ, the program was in very good financial health. However, there was a flip side to these boom times. For one, the great demand meant that more schools were opening and, when we could not provide enrollment to all who wished to attend LIOJ, prospective students from our client companies were being sent to schools that had, perhaps, more flexible programs than ours. Moreover, the cost of providing English-language training in the United States and England had been reduced dramatically with the rise in value of the yen. Furthermore, those companies who had been the mainstay of our program were reaching the point where many of their middle managers had already completed the program. Another development at the time was the dramatic downturn in heavy industry. During this time the major steel makers (Nippon Steel, for example) who had been the source of many students to LIOJ over the years began to lay off workers and basically disappeared as a source for LIOJ. We continually developed new clients, however, so that our enrollments remained remarkably steady during this time. Classes were full, waiting lists were substantial, and the Community Program was bringing in more income than ever before.

It is possible that we did not react sufficiently to the changing reality of Business English instruction in Japan at the time. For me, personally, there was always some tension between LIOJ as a business and LIOJ as a unique educational endeavor with its roots in cross-cultural training and experience. While LIOJ was certainly a financial success during my tenure as director, I was always drawn more to its nature as a focal point for sharing ideas and viewpoints. I believe I speak not only for myself but for many others in saying that we were very successful in this regard.

During my time as director, we began the Team Teaching Program in the local junior high schools. This was again part of our efforts to become more involved in the local community and provide faculty members with enhanced contact with Japanese people and culture. I'm pleased to see that the program has continued to this day.

I'm also pleased to see that our efforts to "internationalize" more extensively continue to bear fruit. Despite the obvious need to reduce faculty (I believe we had something like 20 or so when I was director), what I always felt was the fundamental mission of LIOJ seems to be alive and well.