effect of networks.

Therefore, at the editors’ meeting of ASA I truly enjoyed talking with many friendly academicians about the possibility of establishing an award for the best essay in the international field of American Studies, while also exchanging journals and discussing new collaborations. We are all indebted to Professor Marita Sturken of USC, editor of *American Quarterly*, who very skillfully created a mailing list for us after the first editors’ meeting held in Atlanta in 2004.

Right now I am joining forces with former ASA president Shelley Fisher Fishkin, to co-edit the second issue of *Mark Twain Studies*, bi-annually published in English by The Japan Mark Twain Society. It will be out in October 2006. A long friend of Japanese Twain scholars, Professor Fishkin conceived this collaboration while on a lecture tour in Japan in June, 2005. At a reception in Kyoto, she abruptly proposed to me the wonderful idea of co-editing a special forum on Twain’s short story “The War Prayer” in the forthcoming issue. She was serious enough to produce a CFP, copies of which both of us distributed at ASA and MLA. Her scholarly vitality and alchemical dexterity are fantastic. I am not sure if I should call her just a friendly academician or another academic friend. But with this new transpacific project I have recuperated the long forgotten excitement I felt when I co-edited those other journals with the friends mentioned above. Journal editing is not a routine but another collective dream, if not the American Dream—a dream that will come true in the near future of the transpacific imagination.

**Workshop Works, but How?**

*Tetsuo UENISHI (Hokusei Gakuen University)*

Workshops seem to have a power to activate our academic community. In the last national conference of the American Literature Society of Japan (ALSJ) held at Hokkai University in Sapporo in October 2005, we had a workshop session for the first time, which attracted a much larger audience
than expected especially considering that it was held at lunchtime. As I
myself did not have a chance to attend any of the workshops due to my
duties as a member of the host organization of the conference, I could not
directly draw lessons from them. But just gathering the impressions of
attendants afterwards made me confident that workshops can function as a
vital implement for the ALSJ, while some points to be careful of also
occurred to me.

A workshop is defined in a dictionary as "a period of discussion and
practical work on a particular subject, in which a group of people share their
knowledge and experience," which I am afraid leads to some confusion of
workshop with symposium, whose definition reads "a meeting at which
experts have discussions about a particular subject." The difference is, I
read, that while in a symposium only experts discuss and the audience
listens, asks questions and makes comments, in a workshop all attendants
are supposed to participate in the discussion, with some of them reporting.
If the reporters of a workshop are selected from authoritative scholars, it is
challenging for other attendants to participate in the discussion.

The ALSJ headquarters understandably prompted its members to apply to
give workshops at the last conference by explicitly saying that symposium
style would be permitted. I agree with the decision based on the definition
then, considering that we are eager to introduce an effective tool to energize
our organization. The decision turned out to be right as it allowed members
to easily apply, and the session enjoyed a considerable number of workshops,
which eventually attracted a lot of audience.

But members should not take advantage of this generosity to think that
they can freely hold an extra symposium rather than regular ones. The last
session drew much attention because it was the first time, but it may be
another story to regularly hold symposia in workshop sessions. In this case
each symposium in the two different sessions would compete against each
other and dilute the attention of members to the idea of workshops. We have
to study what to do in workshops to make the sessions effective.

In the academic community of American literature in Japan, the Japan
Ernest Hemingway Association has a long history of workshops. They give
workshops from time to time in their conferences and meetings. But I am not so sure that they strictly hold them under the name of workshop as such. I rather appreciate their “work in progress” sessions as a model of workshops. In these sessions a presenter can give a paper in progress which is naturally open to discussion. While more often than not the reporters are young scholars, veterans sometimes try out their new ideas and ask for advice and comments there. Educational is the key word.

The Hokkaido Chapter of the ALSJ has held “Workshop for Young Scholars” every February/March season. Our idea is that a veteran scholar becomes a facilitator and some of our younger members play the role of reporters, and all members participate in the discussion. The first facilitator was Mr. Shinji Watanabe, professor of Rikkyo University. We invited him to give a seminar class for our younger members in one of our regular meetings under the name of workshop. Members were thrilled and enjoyed the meeting and have become addicted to the idea of workshops and have continued it by themselves.

As that session will be only four years old when this article appears in this journal, we are still in the trial-and-error stage. Room plans have been changing between a platform-and-floor seminar style and a sit-in-a-circle seminar style. Ideas are sometimes exchanged among reporters beforehand and sometimes not. How far in advance the text discussed in the session is announced has depended on the facilitators. The point is that every member can take part in the session and it is educational for each other. We have learned it is not so easy to find the right answers to match these ideals. But we are sure that pursuing them activates our organization.

I greatly appreciate that the ALSJ has started workshop sessions at its national conference, but I hope the Society will not stop discussing how to improve them.