

When our industry crosses over into the new millennium and looks back at the preceding decades, it may hardly recognize its own ancestry. So much is happening in the latter part of this century to change the very nature of our industry. The players, strategies, and technologies that once dominated the various commercial contests will have been transformed into new teams playing new games on new fields under new rules without the traditional economic, technological, and territorial referees.

Already, the new freedoms to compete for the limited attention span of an audience which has less discretionary time at its disposal has made it imperative for all interested enterprises to be as efficient as possible in the production and delivery of their alternative offerings. In human terms, the search for increased efficiency has translated into significant pressures aimed at improved individual productivity. That, in turn, has meant that there has been less time and energy available to devote to outside volunteer work, however worthy, and less individual availability to offer even critical industry support organizations like SMPTE.

It's argued that if you need something done, assign it to someone already busy. Generally, busy people have continuously demonstrated their worth and capabilities and have had the most to offer your Society and industry. They are good and worthy people armed with many worthwhile insights and ideas. Unfortunately, availability has been a problem.

### SMPTE's Heavy Volunteer Reliance

SMPTE has been largely a volunteer organization since its inception. The many Sections of the Society, which provide the most visibility for the organization, rely almost completely on volunteers to initiate, implement, and sustain localized activity. Until recently, we also relied on these volunteers to organize and operate SMPTE conferences and participate, coordinate, and run the many engineering and standardization activities. Volunteers were also asked to energetically contribute to the day-to-day operations of the Society. Indeed, SMPTE is indebted to many wonderful individuals who freely gave of themselves to further the objectives of the organization and its individual and corporate members for many years. These were among the brightest and best; leaders in their field who were responsible for much of the industry's organized growth.

Due to the ongoing structural changes we've been discussing, many of the current counterparts of these people are now less free to make similar personal and/or corporate sacrifices. However, their input and counsel is nowhere less valuable to us now than it was then. The problem we face now is organizing the Society so that many of these people can still contribute without causing

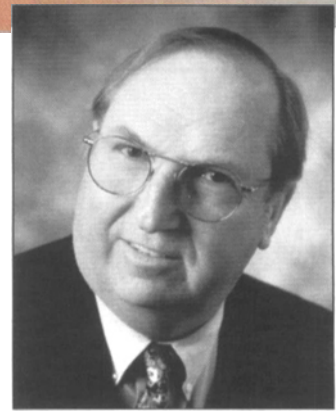
injury to their professional responsibilities or jeopardizing their careers.

### Headquarters Increases Load of Responsibility

Essentially, in the face of such change, it was unrealistic to believe the Society could continue to rely heavily on volunteer effort and energy in all activities. It was equally unrealistic to believe that we could exist, let alone serve, without maintaining high levels of dedicated volunteers in many areas including sections, engineering, and editorial. A few years ago we embarked on a plan to reduce our almost full-reliance on voluntary initiatives and labor, where we could attempt to alleviate some pressure by strengthening and reorganizing the headquarters staff to be more professional and increasingly proactive in the operation of the Society. The more responsibility headquarters could assume for the running of the Society and organization of conferences, in particular, the more we could lessen the commitment we were asking of those established industry leaders we wanted to enlist. We needed those leaders to provide the guidance and direction to the Society that would position us to support you as we addressed the challenges of the new millennium together.

I'm pleased to report that the changes have been working. Under the guidance of Executive Director Frederick Motts, an experienced and professional association manager, headquarters now routinely takes responsibility for initiating and following through the necessary actions to implement the policies and directions set by the Board. Subject to similar workplace pressures, headquarters consistently accomplishes more with a differently organized and somewhat reduced office staff. By doing more, Fred and his staff have made it possible to attract back to SMPTE some of the people whose insights and volunteer energies are needed in order to achieve our goals without significantly detracting from their ability to reach their own. This does much to enhance and strengthen the Society as we address our and your professional future.

In Fred's companion column he introduces his staff, many of whom work quietly and competently behind the scenes. They are the people who serve you. I thought you might like to get to know them a little better.



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