

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John L. Mason



The 143rd Technical Conference and Exhibition in New York City in November was affected by the recent terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. Unfortunately, our conference occurred soon after those events and suffered both financially and in number of attendees. While the program was as strong as ever and our sponsors and exhibitors stood by us, the event did not generate the expected revenue. Also, in light of the recent downturn in the global marketplace, we currently find ourselves in a difficult situation and are seeking your help to alleviate it.

Over the past few years, SMPTE has been fighting to maintain membership but is beginning to experience a slow erosion of that number and conference attendance. This has been accelerated by the economic slump many of us are now experiencing. At the Board meeting held last month, your Governors voted to increase active member dues to \$135 as of January 1, 2002. Even with this raise, our dues are still far lower than other societies in the industry, for example SMPTE does not charge extra fees for chapter membership like other organizations do. Conferences and Section meetings are a central function of SMPTE, and we cannot do without them. Without your support in fees and attendance, they will likely change in scope and focus.

The amount of interest you demonstrate has a direct effect on the types of services SMPTE offers—including conference topics and locations. By attending conferences you show your enthusiasm for being a part of a dynamic organization. This spirit is contagious; when you go home and apply what you've learned, it generates interest from the people around you.

The dues increase injects revenue into the Society but is only a quick fix. In order to thrive, SMPTE must find new ways to increase membership, an issue that will be dealt with in the long-term. I encourage you to sign up your company to support SMPTE and gain marketing leverage. Persuade your employees, your colleagues, and others you know who can benefit from SMPTE's information-sharing activities to join. Remind them of the benefits: the members-only page on the web site, the online *Journal*, the networking opportunities, the contacts to be made and information gathered from Section meetings, etc. Share your experiences and your enthusiasm—it is from members that we gain new members.

It is important to keep in mind that this situation is only temporary. There will be no reduction in the benefits you receive. In the long term, the organization will remain full of life and new ideas. Thank you for your continued support and involvement. I am sure that with your help, SMPTE will come out on top.