



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gavin Schutz

In a speech in Cape Town, South Africa, on June 7, 1966, Robert F. Kennedy said, “There is a Chinese curse which says, “May he live in interesting times.” Like it or not, we live in interesting times...” Journalists picked up the phrase and it has become commonplace.

There can be no doubt we live in interesting times. Almost everything we do requires the ability to deal with change. We must be prepared to adapt appropriately—or risk going the way of the dodo. As technology professionals, we are required to implement change in almost every part of our working life. If we are to survive, we must be able to accept, embrace, and adapt to change. This is true for the Society as well as ourselves—failure to adapt to business, economic, or technological change renders us obsolete and useless.

Today, the Media and Entertainment market segment is feeling the full impact of these changes. Our industry is enduring all the characteristics of the economy in general: slow growth, displacement of labor by technology (resulting in increased efficiencies—greater revenues but fewer jobs), changes in the skill sets necessary for professional survival, and an increasing need to assimilate new and “improved” technologies at an ever increasing rate.

Our Society must adapt to the changing times. As we all know, new technologies are impossible to ignore. I remember many years ago, there was great consternation over the new technology of television. Many thought it would eliminate the need for radio broadcasts and resisted the new technology, because they thought it would wipe out that entire segment of the entertainment market. More recently, there were those who resisted the internet because they thought it was a technology without a purpose. There are still some who think they can deal with it by just ignoring it—effectively burying their heads in the sand, hoping to live out their professional careers without addressing this new set of technologies.

There are many other examples. How many production, post-production, or broadcast facilities today do not have networks as part of their core infrastructure? The care and feeding of these networks represent the fastest growing segment of our profession and have been the focus of our Standards Groups for some time.

SMPTE has done a good job of dealing with realities of these “interesting times.” We have started publishing the *Journal* on the web. We have implemented electronic balloting within the engineering groups. We have started selling merchandise on the internet, migrated the membership database to the web, and provided a method for members to ensure that their own records are accurate. This database can also be searched by members, providing an online method of contacting others.

But there is still much to be done. As a Society, we face the continuing challenge of declining membership and decreasing market relevance in the face of broader technologies being introduced into our industry, forcing us to do more with less.

Over the next year, we will continue to implement changes within the Society that allow us to operate more efficiently and provide a greater range of services to members. We are committed to avoid becoming the dodo birds of the media and entertainment space. We remain committed to providing a full range of services via the internet, utilizing new technologies to their best advantage. For example, we will be extending the electronic balloting process to all levels of Society elections—something that has already been done in many other professional organizations. We are looking at broadening the *Journal* content and continue to update its overall look. The Standards Groups will begin reporting on the status of their work on a regular basis and will be encouraged to provide tutorial and reference material that augment the standards themselves. Other changes will be communicated through these messages as they evolve.

You can help in three ways:

First, sign up a couple of new members. Membership is the single most important way to ensure our ongoing success. In many cases, a significant number of attendees at the local Section meetings are not members. If you have colleagues that derive benefits from the Society and are not members, sign them up.

Second, look at the Sustaining Membership list on the last page of the *Journal*, and support them. They are vital to the ongoing success of the Society.

Third, come to one of our conferences. We have two each year. They are a great return on the investment and will give you direct access to SMPTE management as well as the opportunity to meet and interact with paper authors and other experts in the field. Check out the details at <http://www.smppte.org/conferences/>.

The good news is that we will succeed. We have a great Executive Committee and Board of Governors who are dedicated to driving the goals of the Society and ensuring that it continues to provide the type of services required for the development of our members. I look forward to serving as your President for the next two years and will do everything possible to further the goals of our members.

Let me know what you think. Write a letter to the editor at edit@smppte.org.
See you at the AMI Conference in February.

—Gavin Schutz
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