

Rich Cox, *President, Signal Processing Society*

Although I'm new to the job of President of the Signal Processing Society, I have been a member of the Society for more than 24 years and have been actively involved in its activities for the past 15. I've served in key positions including TC Chair, workshop organizer, Treasurer, and as Vice President of Publications. Moreover, based on these years of service to the Society, I have met and become friendly with many of the leaders of the Society as well as numerous members. As such, I feel completely prepared and comfortable with the responsibilities that await me as SPS President.

Let me begin with a few formalities. All my friends call me Rich, and I expect every one of you to continue that tradition via email, calls, and through the many associations we will be making in the next couple of years. The second thing that I must do, for you to get some sense of who I am and what I will do, is to let you know what I will be working to achieve in my term. If I had to state a single goal for my presidency it would be to focus on the creation of *value* to our members, and to the profession, of *all* of our activities. Let me explain what I mean by creating value. Individuals belong to an organization and volunteer their time to advance its activities if they believe that some real value is being created as a result of both the activities of the organization and their *personal* commitment and individual efforts in support of these activities. To give you some perspective on how I see value being created, let me give you some illustrative examples.

In 1990, when I first became a Member-at-Large on the SPS Board of Governors, the publications of the society included only *IEEE Signal Processing Magazine* and one archival publication, *IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing*. Technically, we were also a partner in *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging* so we actually had one other archival outlet for publications of our research. Since that time, the Society has launched *IEEE Transactions on Image Processing*, *IEEE Transactions on Speech and Audio Processing*, and *IEEE Signal Processing Letters*. We have also developed partnerships with other IEEE Societies in *IEEE Transactions on Multimedia*, *IEEE Transactions on Mobile Computing*, and *IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communication*. As members of three IEEE Councils (Councils have no individual members; its members are other IEEE organizations), we sponsor the three *Transactions* of the Neural Networks Council, the *Transactions* of the Intelligent Transportation Systems Council, and the *Journal* of the Sensors Council. At the invitation of the Computer Society we became technical cosponsors of two of their publications, largely tied to our mutual interest in multimedia. I know that the value created here is both measurable and indisputable.

On the technical meeting side, the Society increased the number of major conferences that we sponsor by 100% when we added the IEEE International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP) in 1994. We now

also partner with three other Societies on the IEEE International Conference on Multimedia and Expo (ICME) that was held for the first time in 2000. This year, we will cosponsor the new IEEE International Symposium on Biomedical Imaging: Macro- to Nano-scale, scheduled for Washington, D.C., in July. In addition to these major conferences, we sponsor 11 workshops that are handled



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by our technical committees and two other workshops for which we are financial and technical cosponsors. There are ten additional workshops which we technically cosponsor and seven more for which we are cooperating sponsors. The *Proceedings* from these technical events are also either published by the Society or made available to our members. I believe that the value created here has enhanced the Society for all our members and for the entire SP community.

Clearly, all of our publications and technical meeting activities provide value. They create new opportunities for publication for our members, and for all signal processing professionals, as well as new opportunities to

disseminate the results of our research and advances to the professional community as a whole. Further, they reflect the Society's response to the demand for expanded coverage of SP technology. As a side benefit, their pricing is preferential both for members and nonmembers compared to that of commercial (for-profit) journals and meetings.

All of this new value came about through the efforts and hard work of many people who believed the value proposition and worked to make the vision come true. I have been proud to work with all of them because it has shown me that when people believe in what you are trying to do, they will work tirelessly and without any financial compensation to help make things happen, be it working on conferences, workshops, new publications, or almost anything that increases the value of membership in the SPS.

Over the past 12 years, it has been my pleasure to work with the past six presidents of the SPS: John Ackenhusen, Dave Munson, Tariq Durrani, Don Johnson, Leah Jamieson, and Panos Papamichalis. These individuals have led the Society in directions that have increased our prominence in the technical community and enabled us to grow steadily to the level of membership that we are at today—more than 22,000 members. The addition of a professional staff for our Society in 1993 has assisted the efforts of these leaders in growing the organization and advancing the Society as an enterprise in support of SP technology. We could not possibly manage an organization this large and diverse without the help and support of our professional staff.

Of course, presidents and professional staff did not enable the growth and create the new directions of our Society by themselves. Countless volunteers helped lay the foundations of

each and every project on which we worked and followed through on the day-to-day work that enabled all new directions that the Society chose to follow to become reality. Without the wisdom, guidance, and hard work of these volunteers, none of the new publications, conferences, workshops, or projects of the Society would have ever seen the light of day.

So my first appeal to you, as the new President of the SPS, is to think seriously about volunteering your time to one of the numerous projects that are both on-going and being created within the Society. A Society as large as SPS has a constant and growing need for more volunteers to help out in every aspect of the running and growth of the Society. For example, every manuscript submitted to any of our journals needs three technical reviewers and an associate editor, whether or not it is subsequently published. Every technical meeting, conference, and workshop needs organizers to plan and execute every aspect of the meeting and make it successful for the many participants. Finally, every new project needs angels who will evangelize and get the project off the ground, as well as a team of people who will make the project a reality and bring its benefits to all members of the Society. Frankly, the SPS needs you—and we want each and every one of you to consider volunteering for one or more projects in the coming year.

Although the main reason to volunteer to help out on any project is to help get the work done, there are many side benefits to serving as a volunteer. First, it is a great way to get to know well some highly talented and hard-working people! This enables each of you to extend both your personal and professional network. Second, it is a great way to gain new experience and broaden your perspectives of the ever-growing field of sig-

nal processing. It enables you to learn more about your own technical area as well as those of other volunteers. (Reviewing papers for our publications is especially recommended in this regard!) On top of the technical expertise to be gained, there is also the chance to gain some valuable managerial experience, such as learning how to attract additional volunteers, how to guide a group to a common purpose, and how to effectively organize a massive work project.

As an outgrowth of our 50th anniversary celebration in 1998 and taking a cue from some other IEEE Societies, the SPS Board approved a recommendation to create a digital library of the Society's entire publications archive, including all conference and workshop proceedings going back to our earliest roots. Of course, that meant locating a vast amount of material, some of which had not been seen in many years. *José Moura* was the champion for this project. He proposed it and did much of the investigation to determine how it could be done. Many people and organizations responded to the call for help extended by *Candy Kamm*. Thanks to all who contributed from their personal libraries. Most especially, I want to recognize *Jim Kaiser* and *Mark Smith*. Jim may well have had the most extensive personal collection of Society publications and donated them all to advance this project. Mark rounded up all of the Society publications he could find at Georgia Tech's EE Department and encouraged donations from elsewhere. This SP archive is currently well under way and should be available to members and associates sometime in 2002.

Two unrelated events will continue to have significant impact on our Society going forward. In 2000, IEEE balanced its books by taking a portion of the reserves of every Society. In 2001, IEEE repeated this. In

2002, we can expect more of the same. While we expect to again finish this year in the black, SPS faces growing challenges to our continued financial health.

The second event was the tragedy of terrorist actions on 11 September 2001. We all know of the immediate impact this had on travel decisions. Our Society's administrative meetings, scheduled for early October, had to be canceled because of the lack of quorums. We intend to continue to hold our conferences and meetings as planned and to carry on our normal Society business. When changes are

necessary to adapt to circumstances, we will do so.

Taken together, these events indicate that we must be more prudent than ever in our financial decisions. This does not mean automatic or large increases in the cost of products and services for our members. For example, the increase in dues for 2002 was a modest \$3, and publication prices were held close to 2001 levels for our members. If we continue to *focus on value* for our members and the larger community we serve, we should be able to steer a course through these and other ob-

stacles that may arise. More than ever, we need the participation of our members.

In future messages, I hope to engage your interest in the details of building value in all of the activities of our Society. Increasing value is our goal. We've all got to work on it *together*.

Rich Cox

Rich Cox
2002-2003 President
r.cox@ieee.org

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