Message from the Chair

Carrying the Torch
Augustus Way Fountain III

I recently read an article in the monthly magazine of another professional organization and was struck by the author’s comments. It appears that other professional, civic and veterans groups are having similar difficulties to SAS in attracting members. When I joined the Army nearly two decades ago, it was expected that an officer joined and actively supported regimental, professional, or veterans groups. The same was true for scientific professional organizations. The trend has now reversed and the expectation of membership is no longer present.

As the new chairman of the New York local section I am now literally carrying the torch for our society. My goal is not to carry a flame to be passed on to our chair-elect next year, but to light a fire of inspiration in all of our members to become active again. In this newsletter I thought that I would share some of the insights I gleaned from the article mentioned (C. Giaimo, Retired Officer, July 2001, p. 67-69) and apply them to our local section.

NYSAS Holds 2001-2002 Planning Meeting
Gloria T. Anderle

The executive meeting held on August 4th was my introduction to NYSAS officers and the chapter. My first challenge was to arrive at the meeting in West Point with my toss salad still in the bowl and without getting lost. Both objectives, to my surprise, were easily achieved. I arrived at the informal meeting, an elegant barbecue, to the smell of warm biscuits in the oven. As the officers arrived with their contributions to the meal in hand, I was introduced.

My recruitment as chapter secretary occurred at the March 22 meeting at Ramapo College, where I innocently offered my services. It seemed a task I was up to, having recent experience taking minutes at a flood relief charitable organization’s meetings. I was soon to learn that this experience would be different.

After a meal consisting of a variety of summer salads, cheese & crackers, wine, a delicious barbecued chicken breast (at the risk of divulging trade secrets - barbecue sauce: 1/3 honey, 1/3 Worcestershire sauce & 1/3 oil), and two incredible cheese cakes baked by the chapter president, Way, the business portion of the meeting commenced. Unlike the meetings held by the aforementioned charitable organization who revere Robert’s rules of order, the NYSAS meeting was conducted in open format. The objective was clear. Before the night was over all the meetings for the 2001–2002 year were to be scheduled. Much of the good natured bantering was lost on me since I was new to the culture, however, it was clear that this is a group that enjoys one another’s company.

The first topic of discussion was the new website format. Way Fountain, the president, had attended a webmaster workshop where he gleaned some valuable tips on web design. The most valuable tip was that the download time should not exceed the site visit time. With that in mind, he told the gathering that the website would have a new look. Corporate sponsors can now purchase banner icons and pictures will be loaded as thumbnails. The latter two features will improve download time. In addition, a new web page is planned. The new page will be designed for students, and will include information on postdoctoral positions and job listings. Finally, a page containing a form to join the NYSAS local chapter will be included. The dues ($10/yr) can be paid on-line via Western Union.

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Effectively Converting Your Ideas Into Reality by Using the Tricks that Marketers Use

Speaker: Cynthia Kradjel
Affiliation: Integrated Technical Solutions

Summary of talk:

Ever feel frustrated because your great idea doesn’t get implemented even though it would be beneficial to your employer? Have you ever solved difficult technical problems only to find out that other departments do not appreciate the solutions you have proposed? Do you feel you could move to a different part of the business or another industry but need to explain how your past experience could be translated to a new role?

In this “Age of Information,” people are swamped with input. Attend this session to learn tips on how to convert your ideas into reality.

"Marketing" is a word that has come to have negative connotations to scientists, but learning to use the tricks that marketers use can help you in both your personal and professional lives.

On September 10th Cynthia Kradjel, a consultant to the pharmaceutical industry, presented the NYSAS with strategies on how to persuasively sell ideas or services to a market. The market may be one’s project supervisor or project leader, the division director of research, or a company to which one would like to provide consulting services or secure a job.

Too often, the training given to scientists is antithetical to the skills needed to succeed in marketing. The objective of marketing is to create a desire for goods, services or ideas. But, scientists are trained to be objective and argue facts. And so, their technical training puts them at a disadvantage in the sales arena that taps emotional rather than intellectual responses. However, times have changed. Scientists now have access to the tools that can enable them to develop the marketing skills hitherto neglected in their training. Anyone with a computer, internet access and the motivation can find information to develop a marketing strategy.

Cynthia provided her audience with some basic points to keep in mind when preparing a sales presentation. And here I will take Cynthia’s advice and state each point simply.

- Know your audience and tailor your language to its knowledge base. Avoid technical terms and jargon.
- Focus on the few important points that you want your audience to leave with. Avoid the urge to convey a complete and in-depth understanding of the project, idea or service
- Keep the report or presentation simple and short. Long detailed reports will go unread. Use bullets whenever possible.
- Begin your presentation or report at the beginning. Don’t be afraid to state the obvious or to repeat important points. What is obvious to you may not be obvious to your market.
- When offering a new idea or problem solution, do not be deterred by your audience’s initial reaction. Good ideas may sound silly or too simple at first, but the best solutions are often the simplest.

In addition to a discussion of marketing ideas, Cynthia gave some tips on creating, managing and marketing a consulting service. Here are a few:

- Promote your service. Give it a name, and appealing visual image.
- Price: Consider benefits as part of the price. When developing a fee schedule, be sure to include 15% for FICA taxes. As an employee, you pay 7½% and your employer pays the second 7½%. However, when self employed you are taxed at the full 15%.
- Job Time estimates: Take the longest possible time estimate to do the project and then double it. Consider the 1/3 rule: 1/3 of the time is needed to secure the job; 1/3 is needed to complete the job and 1/3 to get paid for the job. Do not be afraid to offer a guarantee or a trial period.
- Manage expectations: spend time getting to know the job. Get a clear definition of the solution before beginning. Remember that what the client asks for may be different from what is needed.
- Don’t let perfect ruin good – know when the job is complete.
- Mistakes are opportunities. Handle any error immediately. Don’t be afraid to bring mistakes to the attention of the client. Learn from your mistakes
- Monitor the process. Keep complete records of the process and get a third party evaluation.
- Get out there, embrace opportunity and enjoy it!
Sarah Sebastian, a senior in Biochemistry at Ramapo College’s School of Applied and Theoretical Science was this year’s NYSAS student award winner. Sarah is a German national who has been studying in the US since her senior year in HS. Sarah is continuing her research in Dr. Robert Mentore’s research group and after graduation in the Spring of 2002, she plans to enter a graduate program in Biochemistry. NYSAS president, Way Fountain presented Sarah the NYSAS 2001 Undergraduate Award at the September 10th, 2001 meeting at Ramapo College in Mahwah, NJ.

Sarah recently presented her work at the NY ACS meeting and her abstract is reproduced below.

THE EFFECT OF SURFACE ENERGY ON PROTEIN ADSORPTION
Sarah Sebastian and Robert Mentore,
Ramapo College of New Jersey, School of Theoretical and Applied Science, Mahwah, NJ 07430

The adsorption of proteins on a medical implant or prosthetic device in contact with flowing blood influences the properties of the device in a host. The first step in the formation of thrombi is the deposition of albumin, gamma-globulin, and fibrinogen of the surface. There is a strong interest in controlling the formation of blood clots by carefully selecting materials with surface properties that prevent thrombus formation. The focus of the present work was to modify model surfaces and to expose them to flowing protein solutions in order to determine the effect on protein adsorption. Polished gold surfaces

SAS Meeting  Continued from page 1
the local chapter will not receive the SAS journal or be eligible to hold national office, but can participate in local chapter activities.

The meeting moved onto the business of planning the speakers and activities for the coming year. Several ideas and events were discussed. These included the EAS Gold Medal Symposium on October 3rd in Atlantic City, NJ, teleconferencing some meetings to reach members who reside in the more remote areas of NYSAS region, a May symposium for undergraduate research, an April social event and tour of a facility of interest to NYSAS members and their families and, of course, the Hudson River boat ride in June. Speakers for November, February and March were not finalized by the end of the meeting. These will be announced once the speakers are booked.

Though most of us have full schedules that include professional and family obligations, I hope to see many of you at our upcoming meetings. Professional societies provide a forum to meet those of similar interests and to expand one’s professional circle. Opportunities for professional growth await you at the next NYSAS meeting.
When I meet fellow spectroscopists, they generally fall into three categories: people who are members, but inactive in the local section; people who are members and active in the local section; and people who have never heard of the Society for Applied Spectroscopy. When I asked members why they aren’t active in the local section, their answers run along these lines:

* “The local section is more of a social organization with nothing to offer me.”
* “I went to a meeting once and I didn’t feel welcome.”
* “I’m married, I have a full-time career, and my kids are still in school. I am already over committed with too many demands for my time.”
* “The meetings are too far out of my way for me to attend.”

The stated objective of the Society is “to advanced and disseminate knowledge and information concerning the art and science of spectroscopy and other allied sciences.” Because many of our meetings are dinner style seminars, our local section might appear to be primarily a social organization. I agree that our group has shared some great meals and beer together. However, with a more detailed investigation, you’ll find that there is more to our local section than good food and drink.

Our local section does a great deal to support the Society’s objective. We have a newsletter, publish a web site (www.nysas.org) to sponsor the Gold Medal Symposium and Award at the Eastern Analytical Symposium and Exposition (EAS), and annually award graduate and undergraduate awards in spectroscopy to deserving students in the community. For two years now we have presented these Students awards during our now famous Hudson River boat ride.

Often, some people feel unwelcome or slighted after visiting a local section meeting for the first time. Our members come from all walks of academia, industry and every race, color and creed. It is difficult for an organization to meet everyone’s expectations the first time. Most local section members are unaware of how a visitor perceives the organization or meeting. That is until someone brings it to his or her attention. If you ever leave a local section meeting feeling unwelcome, give me a call. I will do my utmost to make you and future visitors feel welcome.

Society and local section membership has brought me into contact with the “giants” in spectroscopic research and industry. In time I have had the honor of being called “friend” by some of these people. More importantly, active membership has given me the opportunity to personally interact with other scientists who share a common interest. In my position, I am often the only spectroscopist around. While lit-servers and WebPages may satisfy some for the exchange of scholarly information, I continue to argue that nothing will replace the personal exchange of ideas among people. The ways in which the Society provides this contact is through the sponsorship of conferences and colloquia, but these opportunities are limited. Our local section provides monthly personal interaction with students, colleagues, peers and other members through dinner meetings, seminars, and get-togethers. I had a boss who used to say that “if you want something done well, give it to the busiest person.” We are all busy people. Still, active local section membership is valuable to those who want to be or call themselves a professional. Early on we learn to schedule or make time for the things that are important. No one can attend every meeting or function. However, if SAS is important to you I would encourage each of you to commit to attending at least one meeting per quarter. If participation in monthly meetings is still too difficult, there are plenty of other ways to support the local section, such as: student awards committee, Gold Medal Symposium committee, EAS support, newsletter articles, and many more.

Another benefit of attending local section meetings is making job contacts. For those seeking their first job or the seasoned professional, often the key to finding the right job is through a personal contact at the university or corporation. Let’s face it, that’s the way it is. Unless you get out and meet folks in the same profession, how else are you going to make contacts?

New York local section members are “assigned” based on geography. Our members live everywhere form the Canadian border south to middle New Jersey and west of Binghamton to western edge of Connecticut. While our territory is expansive, over 80% of our local section members live within two hours by car of New York City. We have had meetings in NYC, just outside of NYC, in New Jersey, West Point and other locations nearby in order to try boosting attendance. I am open to any ideas to increase membership and participation, especially of students.

The students studying spectroscopy in our colleges and universities today are our seed corn. If we fail in our mission with them today, then the Society has little hope in the future.

The Society is currently seeking a change to our By-Laws to form “technical” groups in addition to local sections. Under this change, members would be able to choose to belong to a local section and/or a technical group. While technical groups offer members additional opportunities to focus their efforts within the Society, they also have the potential to strip active members away from local sections. By actively supporting the New York local section, you have the opportunity to interact with and impact students and members in our community. This is something technical groups cannot do.

Local section membership is not only a benefit of our Society, but the most under utilized resource available to spectroscopists. So as you ponder your role in the New York section of the Society of Applied Spectroscopy, let me leave you with Five Reasons to be active in our local section.

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Five Reasons to Join the New York SAS Local Section

1. **Fellowship.** – Local sections provide opportunities for camaraderie among spectroscopists

2. **Contacts.** – Networking provides local sales and job information not available any other way

3. **Local Communication.** – NYSAS provides a newsletter, website with advertising and job posting

4. **Volunteer Opportunities.** – Local awards

5. **Promotion of Science & Spectroscopy.** – Speaking opportunities.
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