

Still Looking Forward with the MRS Way of Doing Things

I am always amazed at the excitement generated by Materials Research Society meetings. I am sure that we all hear good comments about the research and the organization. How does it happen?

About two years before any meeting, meeting chairs are invited by the President of the Society. The meeting chairs are first introduced to the MRS staff and MRS program committee. They are then challenged to define the scope of the meeting, and they do this through their selection of topics and symposium organizers. Of course input comes from many sources including suggestions from the membership.

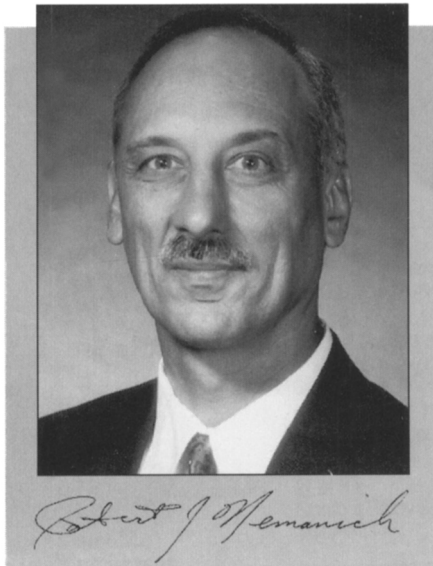
Working closely with the program development subcommittee, the meeting chairs complete their task and gather the proposals for symposia topics from their invited symposium organizers. All along the way the chairs and organizers are asked to be guided by their best and most creative insights about the directions of research and to use good judgment in their approach.

In the end, the meetings will have well over 100 symposium organizers working closely in small groups to develop the most exciting program possible. In essence, this group serves as the organizing committee of the particular meeting. This approach leads to an involved group of researchers dedicated to integrating their best views and efforts into a program. Moreover, each meeting will involve an almost totally different group to carry out this task.

This might be called the MRS way of doing things: researchers making decisions about what they know best, and sharing the responsibility as widely as possible. The volunteers are supported with an outstanding staff who know how to get things done and who share the creative energy of the members.

Just because we have a way of doing things does not mean that things are static in MRS. In the past few years we have seen many new topics added to our meetings and Tutorials are now an integral part of the symposia. In essence, these changes and additions are simply manifestations of the MRS way of doing things.

The new organization of *MRS Bulletin* reflects the same approach used in the meetings. The 1998 Volume Organizers



have already carefully crafted many of the technical topics to appear in the upcoming year. I hope you will read the article in this issue that highlights the 1998 Volume Organizers and describes how things are working in the *Bulletin*.

Many of our members have become so involved with MRS that they say the Society is now the focus of their activities and is becoming a large part of their professional identity. Beyond the meetings and the *Bulletin*, the Society is involved with an ever-increasing circle of activities.

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In the near future we will be facing some interesting challenges. To improve the meeting environment at the Fall meeting, we are planning a phased move of many of the technical sessions and other activities into the Hynes Convention Center. This should provide a better envi-

ronment for the sessions and also for interacting with our colleagues. Still our meeting sites for the Fall and Spring meeting have little or no room for adding new sessions. The long-range planning committee is actively considering new ways to both bring new topics into the meetings and to have other types of meetings, particularly workshops.

Many other aspects will be important for our members at all levels of their careers and that will contribute to building a professional identity. MRS is already actively involved in public affairs, and we will explore new ways to present the opportunities of materials research to the general public. Various forums for discussions about research support and other critical issues may also be important to our membership. Furthermore, because of the interdisciplinary nature of materials research, intersociety activities and coordination will be of increasing importance.

Materials research, of course, is the central activity of most of our membership, and we will be looking for new ways to extend our excitement of the research activities to students at all levels.

The developments in electronic communications may strongly affect our publications. We have already seen the *Journal of Materials Research* issued in CD format, and the *MRS Internet Journal of Nitride Semiconductor Research* is an exciting experiment in new ways for scientists to communicate research progress. You should also find that the MRS website will explore new methods to communicate with the membership. In addition, we are now starting to explore how the MRS Symposia Proceedings could be improved.

I believe that we will find that the MRS way of doing things will be important in meeting these challenges. I hope that you will take a few moments now or sometime during this year to let us know your thoughts about any aspect of the Society's activities or plans. Please send me a note or e-mail (nemanich@mrs.org). I am looking forward to hearing from you.

BOB NEMANICH

PS: Did you know that MRS will celebrate its 25th Anniversary this year?