

Reflections on 1992 MRS Activities

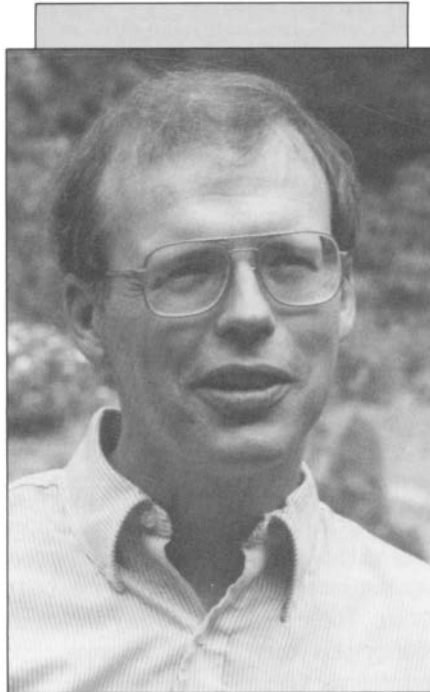
It hardly seems possible that the time has come for me to write a message for the *MRS Bulletin* as outgoing 1992 MRS President. Since the deadline for this December issue is mid-October, I am writing this only about three-fourths of the way through my one-year term. Nevertheless, now is a good opportunity for me to reflect on the activities of the last nine months, my expectations for the next three months, and the rewards and burdens of the MRS Presidency.

As the seventeenth MRS president, I have benefitted from the prior contributions of many, many people. Also I have benefitted from the talents and hard work of the other four members of the current MRS Executive Committee. Under MRS Executive Director John Ballance's leadership, the MRS headquarters staff has become a major league team for assisting volunteers in running first-class meetings, in publishing outstanding periodicals and proceedings volumes, in managing the financial affairs of the Society, and in providing many other kinds of support and services for members, volunteers, and corporate affiliates of the MRS.

Even with the excellence and dedication of the MRS headquarters staff, volunteers remain the heart of the Materials Research Society. Their contributions are apparent in the excellence of our meetings, thanks to the efforts of meeting chairs, symposium chairs, and program committee members. Other MRS committees are essential to the success of our awards program, our publications, and our continuing education activities. Less visible to most members, but equally important, are committees for academic affairs and university chapters, corporate participation, public relations and publicity, membership, long range planning, and external affairs.

During 1992, I have had several opportunities to represent the MRS on issues critically important to the materials research community. As MRS President, I prepared a statement in support of the Advanced Materials and Processing Program. This statement, published in the March 1992 issue of the *MRS Bulletin*, was sent to key members of Congress and to presidents of other professional societies concerned with materials science and engineering, urging support for federal funding of the AMPP initiative.

In July, I spoke on behalf of the MRS to the Panel on the Nation's Research Universities of the President's Council of Advisors



G. Slade Cargill III

on Science and Technology. In this testimony, I urged increased emphasis on interdisciplinary research, establishment of a system of strategic university/industry/government partnerships, and improved Federal support, to enable universities to achieve their potential as key contributors in the United States.

In October, an MRS statement was submitted to the Special Commission on the Future of NSF by Jim Roberto, Tom Picraux, and me, as past-president, president-elect, and 1992 president of the MRS (this statement was published in the November issue of the *MRS Bulletin*). We pointed out that university research and graduate education in science and engi-

neering are critical to U.S. economic well-being and industrial competitiveness. We urged that NSF maintain its role as the premier supporter of research and education for science and engineering in the nation's universities, but that, if additional funding is available to fulfill this mission adequately and to expand NSF's efforts for strengthening links between academic science and industry, NSF should participate, together with other federal agencies, in fulfilling this additional important mission.

In each of these cases, statements were developed jointly by Jim Roberto, Tom Picraux, and me, with input from the leadership of the MRS External Affairs Committee and from the MRS Washington representative, Ron Kelley. In these times of increased economic pressures, significant employment problems, and increased competition for resources, it is more important than ever that the MRS, together with other professional societies, assist in the development of responsible and effective national policies in areas that affect the materials community and its ability to contribute to the national well-being. I am pleased by the efforts we have made in 1992, although it is hard to judge our effectiveness or that of other professional societies in meeting this important need.

As we approach the end of 1992, the membership of the MRS continues to grow, now approaching 11,000. The financial stability of the MRS has been strengthened through improvements in planning, cost controls, and pricing. A new, major MRS award, the Turnbull Lectureship, has been established. Our grass roots education activities offer increased encouragement and assistance to MRS members as volunteers in K-12 science education. Our involvement with other materials-related societies, through IUMRS, joint sponsorship of meetings and workshops, and informal contacts between society staff and volunteer leaders, continue to increase communication and cooperation among these groups to better serve the materials community.

My year as MRS President has brought many personal rewards—the satisfaction of serving on a successful team, the stimulation of facing new challenges, and the pleasure of new acquaintances and friendships. For these opportunities, I offer my sincere thanks to the membership of the Materials Research Society.

G. Slade Cargill III
1992 MRS President