



My Year

Hello, there! Nice to be back. I have enjoyed my year as SPIE President and I'm looking forward to editing *Optical Engineering* again. I must say 2000 was an interesting and rewarding year. If you attended Photonics West in San Jose or the Annual Meeting in San Diego, you know how dynamic the field of optical engineering has become. Our field is the enabling technology that is providing incredible opportunities to accomplish wonderful things and is crucial in the establishment of new modes of communication from telecom to display to image control and processing.

Part of my year was taken up with visits to a number of the international SPIE chapters and meeting with some of our partners and colleagues in Europe and Asia. Although this busy travel schedule left little time for sightseeing, these trips gave the new SPIE Executive Director, Eugene Arthurs, and me a chance to understand the problems and opportunities in optical engineering that exist outside the US.

For example, it has been nearly ten years since SPIE began a collaboration with the European Optical Society (EOS). As Europe changes and the needs of the national optics societies change, it became clear from our trip that the leadership of EOS and SPIE had to rethink the way we work together in the future. It was decided that the series of meetings presented under the EUROPTO banner would be ended and that SPIE's collaboration in the future could be with EOS or any of its member societies. One example of a European meeting that may be a harbinger of things to come was the Astronomy 2000 meeting in Munich. The enthusiasm of the participants and the breadth of coverage at that meeting were, well . . . astronomical.

In February I was invited to Seoul, Korea, to help the Optical Society of Korea celebrate its 10th anniversary. I was pleased that I was able to participate on behalf of SPIE members. Later, in May, Eugene and I visited several locations in Asia to talk to members and leaders of our chapters there and to seek their advice and cooperation in presenting a series of conferences for the benefit of SPIE members and others in the Pacific Rim optical en-

gineering community. Notable among these is the Asia-Pacific Optical Communications conference (APOC 2001) to be held in Beijing in October 2001.

One of the things that has concerned me during my year has been the benefits that SPIE members receive. As an educational society it's hard to segregate any of our traditional services to the optical community to just our members. For example, some societies have restricted their Member Directory to members only. But that decreases the utility of the service. One specific member benefit is the replacement of *OE Reports*, our newspaper-type publication, which has kept members abreast of developments in optical engineering, with *oe magazine*, a full-color magazine with enhanced technical and informational content. I know that some felt that *OER* was like the "church newsletter" and would like to have seen it kept as it was, but overall I believe the new magazine will do an even better job of keeping you abreast of all aspects of our field at a level and in a format that this journal cannot.

One of the hidden strengths of SPIE has been the Technical Groups that focus on a specific field within optical engineering. To provide these groups with the resources needed to help their members, a series of Discussion Forums has been introduced on SPIE Web. These moderated forums enable members to pose questions to their peers. They are much like the old SPIE listservers that some of the Technical Groups used to use, but with the added benefits of threaded discussions and the ability to attach drawings, figures, documents, and other items that can contribute to the discussion. Not all the groups are represented yet, but eventually all will have their own Forum. Take a look on SPIE Web (www.spie.org).

Since the failed merger vote, the leaders of SPIE and OSA have sought opportunities where our organizations could collaborate. We have also held two meetings of the leadership of both societies—in December 1999 and at the OSA Annual Meeting this past October. Out of these discussions have emerged something as simple as a link on our respective Members Directory web pages to something as elaborate as a jointly sponsored and organized biomedical optics meeting in Europe at Laser Munich 2001.

To better serve the optical engineering communities

that are now established in various parts of the United States, SPIE has organized a series of regional meetings. The objective is different from our large multi-conference meetings in that SPIE seeks to bring those involved in optics in a region together to network and to discover the resources available to them locally. Thus far we have had successful meetings in Seattle, Albuquerque, and Charlotte. Additional regional meetings are planned for Rochester (April 10–11, 2001), and Tucson (September 2001). If you are part of these regional communities, you really should attend.

With all the prospects for optical engineering, you would think that we could look forward to even better days ahead. But if you look behind you to see who will help as our field continues to grow, you will find that there are very few young people traveling the road you have taken. There is a shortage of technically trained persons and it doesn't look like it's going to get much better anytime soon. The topic is one that causes me to oscillate between hope and despair . . . and will be the subject of a future editorial.

I cannot end this report of my year as SPIE President without commenting on the dedication of the SPIE staff. They are hardworking, intelligent men and women, who have a sense of service and a great sense of humor. Although you may interact with a few of them at Photonics West or the Annual Meeting, there is a great bunch of people up there in Bellingham organizing meetings, courses, and exhibits which come off nearly flawlessly, publishing journals, books, and nearly a proceedings a day, and otherwise helping members and others with their needs. They deserve a vote of thanks.

Finally, I would like to thank Roger Lessard for ably standing in as Editor during my absence. During this past year we have established a method for rapid publication of work through *Optical Engineering Letters*. We hope you will take advantage of it. Merci beaucoup, Roger.

Donald C. O'Shea
Editor