

Looking Back with Gratitude

This has been a year of transition, growth, and accomplishment for the Materials Research Society. Hundreds of key volunteers and MRS staff members contributed to this year's successes, and are building for the future. This column is to recognize their achievements, and implicitly, to invite the volunteers of the future to come aboard.

By the numbers: MRS membership has risen above the 13,000 mark, the largest membership ever! In addition, the MRS Web site receives on the order of 100,000 unique visitors every month, demonstrating the increasing reach of our society. The vision and energy of numerous committees and staff members played a part in this growth. Special kudos goes to Membership Affairs Director Gail Oare, and Membership Committee Chair Charles Barbour.

By the book and journal: Our MRS proceedings are entering a new age of electronic meeting capture while preserving the high-quality bound volume recording of symposia, thanks to Information Services Chairs Steve Moss and Linda Horton, Bound Volume Subcommittee Chair Cliff Renschler, and the Information Services Committees and Task Forces, supported by Information Services Director Michael Driver. We also salute Gordon Pike, Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Materials Research*, for his tireless efforts at enhancing the scope and quality of our flagship journal.

Til we meet again: MRS staged two hugely successful meetings, inaugurating the Moscone Center venue in San Francisco and increasing the international, government, and entrepreneurial activities at the meetings. Spring Meeting Chairs (Israel J. Baumvol, James J. De Yoreo, Siegfried Mantl, and Thomas X. Neenan) and Fall Meeting Chairs (Shefford P. Baker, Julia W. P. Hsu, Bethanie J. H. Stadler, and Richard A. Vaia), and all of their co-organizers along with Meetings Director Pat Hastings and Meetings Manager Dick Stevens and support staff deserve a round of applause for maintaining the electricity and excitement of our major activity during such volatile times, as well as Exhibit Manager Mary Kaufold and her staff for engaging our corporate partners.

Strange and true: The *Strange Matter* museum exhibition continues to draw record crowds and sign up more venues. The conception and execution of this mammoth project are credited to Project Chair Shenda Baker, Immediate Past President Merrilea Mayo, Secretary Alan Hurd, and Alan Taub, and the tireless support of Project Manager Richard

Souza. This year, we are also grateful to Oversight Committee members Amy Moll, Ainissa Ramirez, Kaveri Chaturvedi, and Beth Stadler, and also to Shefford Baker, Gene Kim, Mary Anne White, and Eric Garfunkel for their special contributions.

Bulletin just in: The *MRS Bulletin* continues to be a fun and informative read, keeping us up to date on the latest research trends, government issues, people on the move, and emerging fields. We thank Paul Drzaic, Tony E. Haynes, and Helena Van Swygenhoven for developing this year's theme topics, and Lindsay Greer for chairing the Editorial Board. Board Members Jack Westbrook and Steve Moss also added special contributions to *Bulletin* content and direction. I am especially thankful to Editor Betsy Fleischer and her staff for their expertise in ensuring quality and comprehensiveness.

Points on the Board: The Board of Directors wrestled with many issues arising out of the increasingly electronic nature of information delivery and business transactions. We strove to support new efforts that help the public appreciate the value of materials work, such as increasing the visibility of research at startup companies. We are proud to welcome William Frezza, our first venture capitalist, to a seat on our Board for next year. We also thank Bruce Clemens for chairing the Planning Committee of the Board, responsible for the challenging task of anticipating and proactively responding to changes in the MRS landscape in the several-years-out timeframe. Thanks go to Cynthia Volkert for chairing the Operational Oversight Committee of the Board, responsible for restructuring the Technical Program Committee and resolving higher-level operational issues. Our intersociety activities have also recently expanded, thanks in part to External Relations/Volunteer Involvement Board Chair Jerry Floro and the particular interest of his committee colleagues Mihal Gross and Marie-Isabelle Baraton. From Headquarters, we thank Executive Director John Ballance for ensuring a high level of support for the Board's activities, and Director of Finance Bob Pachavis for keeping our focus on the business side of things.

It's academic: The Academic Affairs Committee, under the leadership of Linda Vanasupa, has launched two new projects this year. "Curriculum Crossroads" brings a range of information on trends, resources, and accreditation to the MRS Web site. Craig Arnold, Lisa Klein, Christos Dimitrakopoulos, Slade Cargill, Jung Han, Kirk Kolenbrander, Peter Searson, and Steve Yalisove are part of

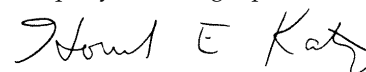
this effort. "Chapter Challenge" was developed to energize University Chapters through friendly competition. We particularly thank Kalpana Katti, Linda Vanasupa, Craig Arnold, and Kathy Chen for this inspiration.

Eyes on the prize: This year, we had a record number of nominations for our major awards, as well as an unprecedented number of applications for the graduate student awards given at our major meetings. We laud Tom Picraux for his proactivity in stimulating these nominations, and for the outstanding award selections that resulted and the diligent and thoughtful award selections of the Committee, led by Subcommittee Chairs Merrilea Mayo, Max Legally, Anne Mayes, and Julia Phillips.

Finding our voice: Our Government Affairs Committee's Materials Voice letter-writing software went live on the MRS Web site in October. The committee hosted a kiosk at the Fall Meeting to allow members to contact legislators on site. In particular, we thank Ted Besmann, Ron Kelley, Joe Miragliotta, Giselle Ow-Yang, and Robert Hull for this successful implementation. The committee also generated e-mail alerts supporting funding for the National Science Foundation; participated in the Board congressional visit in July; and, through Merrilea Mayo and Brian Holloway, helped spur the ASTRA umbrella group to assemble a high-profile Board of its own.

Wide world of MRS: The International Relations Committee, under Moog Chow and Orlando Auciello and through the energies of Olivia Graeve, Sudipta Seal, and Marie-Isabelle Baraton, hosted a Fall Meeting forum bringing together representatives from funding agencies to promote bilateral researcher exchange programs. We have also elevated our engagement with the International Union of Materials Research Societies, two officers of which are former MRS Presidents John Baglin and Robert Nemanich.

Thanks for the memories: It has been a great and humbling privilege to have had the opportunity to write these letters. It is my hope that they have served in some small way to enlighten and encourage the *Bulletin* readership about materials research. I wish my worthy successor, Dave Eaglesham, who has already made invaluable contributions to MRS governance, an equally rewarding experience.



HOWARD E. KATZ
2004 MRS President