

Message from the Chair

Larry Thompson

Sept. 2003 addendum

The months of July and August are transition times for ELD. We pay the bills from one conference and begin planning for the next. The committee chairs that have stepped down turn over materials to the newly installed chairs. The officers take another step further down the Secretary – Program Chair – Division Chair – Past Chair gauntlet. And so, before I look at future ELD issues, I'd like to take a moment to comment about the Nashville conference.

In a word, Nashville was GREAT!

Everyone who took part did a fantastic job. As Program Chair, I was anticipating at least one moment of pure panic when something went completely wrong. But, it never happened! The rooms were spacious, the speakers arrived on time, the microphones worked, the computers didn't crash. For the most part, it was glitch free. And the reason it went so well was because of the efforts of all of the participants who worked on the conference during the year.

The Get Acquainted / SIG session featured a continental breakfast for the first time, and Alice Trussell did a great job of organizing nearly 100 noshing ELDers into interest groups.

The technical session moderators had lined up full slates of interesting speakers. A special thanks to all of them: Honora Nerz, Linda Martinez, Tracy Gabridge, Jay Bhatt, Suzanne Weiner, Mel DeSart, and Jill Powell.

Kate Lee organized the poster session and commandeered adjacent poster display boards for easy viewing.

The New Members Reception on Monday evening was held at Vanderbilt. Kudos to Amy Van Epps, the Membership Chair. Organizing an offsite event, with the related transportation and catering issues, requires a lot of time and effort.

Greg Raschke picked a winner for the ELD Annual Banquet. The Merchants Restaurant provided good food, a convenient location, and enough room to hold the 110 people in attendance.

In a behind-the-scenes role, Ann Morgan's team reviewed all of the submitted ELD papers and made editorial recommendations that were very helpful to the authors.

In addition to all of the above organizers and moderators there were those ELDers who presented papers and posters. Thanks to Beth Smith, Jeanine Williamson, James Ottaviani, Rachel Callison, Jay Bhatt, Nestor Osorio, Kate Lee, Carol Brinkman, Ibrionke Lawal, Barbara Williams, Deborah Kegel, Jill Powell, Bob Kackley, Amy Van Epps, Michelle Potter, Jiabin Wang, Martin Boemeke, David Radcliffe, Greg Raschke, Virginia Baldwin, Karen Grigg, Elizabeth Mengel, John Napp, and Maliaca Oxnam.

I'd also like to thank the two previous Program Chairs, Gretchen Sneff and Mel DeSart. Both of these individuals took the time to give me advice about the program content and scheduling.

Finally, thanks to the Program Committee consisting of Linda Martinez, Beth Smith, Gretchen Sneff, Andy Shimp, and Bob Schwarzwaldner. They offered invaluable assistance in the initial planning stages of the conference.

And now, looking at the year ahead . . .

Those of you who were at the conference know how important the corporate sponsors are to ELD. To put it in "wallet" terms, if we didn't have the corporate sponsors, and we wanted to continue to have the same conference events, we would need to charge at least \$100 per person for ticketed events and we'd need to raise every ELD member's dues to \$20 per year. Consider the sponsorship we received in Nashville:

Get Acquainted / SIG Session	Breakfast sponsored by Knovel
New Members Reception	Food and transportation sponsored by IEEE
A/V Upgrades For All Sessions	Funds provided by Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
Honorarium for guest speakers	Funds provided by INSPEC
ELD Banquet	Sponsored by Elsevier / Engineering Index

The total of all these contributions is approximately \$15,000.

In the past, we have relied upon an informal method of contacting corporate sponsors and allocating the funds we receive. Now, however, in order to make sure that nothing falls through the cracks, we would like to add a bit more structure to the process. Steve Stich has accepted the position as Chair of the Development Task Force. Other members of this group will be Mel DeSart and myself. During the next few months we will set up the guidelines for a Development Committee, with the intention of naming this committee in the spring of 2004.

Another change for ELD in the coming year will be electronic voting. With the passage of the new bylaws, ELD members can now vote for officers electronically, therefore opening up voting to ELD members who are unable to attend the conference.

During the next six months, the details of this new voting method need to be worked out and implemented. An Electronic Voting Task Force will be created to do this.

I'm looking forward to the upcoming year. If any of you have ideas for ELD projects or improvements, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Larry Thompson
ELD Division Chair