

*As the Presidents See It...***Nucleation Was More Fun Than Growth*****E.N. Kaufmann, 1985 MRS President***

In 1985, whenever my phone rang, it was not uncommon for the caller to be a new MRS volunteer asking, "What is the policy" on such and such. It would not do to tell those familiar with far larger and older societies that we had no policies. What would they think of MRS? So, trusting that as they became more familiar with our unique style, they would realize that volunteers had been making their own rules, I would invent a policy to tide them over. In 1985 we were riding a wave of enthusiasm for the Society's existing and potential contributions to multidisciplinary information exchange—and for the field of materials research *per se*. Steering—more than long-range planning—was the challenge.

Following on the heels of the presidency of Woody White, who set an unrepeatable standard for energy and dedication, was no easy task. Woody and his predecessors gave us our meetings, proceedings, *MRS Bulletin*, and a headquarters office, to list just a few ongoing programs. With that underpinning, we were able to nucleate many new activities and practices. For example, *JMR* was started, with the first issue dated January/February 1986. Publication of MRS Proceedings was transferred from Elsevier to MRS, with the first self-published volume appearing in 1985. The first real Spring Meeting on the real West Coast was run in San Francisco in April of 1985. (The first "near" Spring Meeting, not quite so far west, was of course in February 1984 in Albuquerque). Democracy in MRS was ushered in with the election of 1985, *yours truly* having been the last unopposed machine candidate for an officer position.

In 1985, the position of chair for International Relations was created, culminating in the recent formation of IUMRS. MRS Council approved, in principle, a Washington office for MRS which, albeit after an extended gestation, is now up and running. For the U.S. materials community at large, the National Academy Study on Materials Science and Engineering was begun in 1985. (You see, nucleation in materials was rampant).

To see the fruits of initiatives realized in real time was by far the most satisfy-

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ing aspect of the MRS experience in those days. Of course some of the symptoms of a more mature organization did creep in. We had already begun to need professional meeting planning help, legal advice, personnel policies and procedures, auditors, and an external affairs activity to address relations with domes-

tic and overseas societies that had begun to notice us.

Most remembered, with a great sense of accomplishment and nostalgia, is the camaraderie I enjoyed with energetic, enthusiastic, dedicated, like-minded colleagues on the road to building a better MRS. To fairly and accurately characterize the state of the materials field then, and the changes that have taken place in the intervening years, is not possible in a short article, or perhaps even a single text. Suffice it to note that the orphan field of 1985 is now well on its way to becoming a parent field for modern technology.

As you have read in the reminiscences of other former officers, and as you read in virtually every candidate's statement for MRS office, the growth of MRS has been the great success—and the greatest challenge—for the Society. I view the accomplishments of more recent volunteer leaders with awe and admiration as they have successfully grappled with our growth. But I can't help sympathizing just a little, for they missed the sheer entrepreneurial fun which was still MRS in 1985.

*Elton Kaufmann is associate director of the Strategic Planning Group at Argonne National Laboratory.*

**A Year of Change*****Woody White, 1984 MRS President***

Over the past 20 years, the Materials Research Society (MRS) has evolved from an informal group of volunteers which held a single yearly meeting (the Boston Meeting) into what is now the most dynamic technical society in the world. 1984 was an important year in that evolution and, because of everything that was going on, it was a very exciting time to be involved with MRS. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as president that year.

I had never heard of MRS until 1978 when I participated in the first MRS symposium on Laser Annealing, one of the most exciting conferences I had ever attended. I was immediately attracted to the Society and later served in a number of capacities, including symposium co-chair, meeting chair, vice president, and finally, in 1984, president.

In 1984, virtually everything in the

Society was expanded or changed. Major accomplishments that year included the inaugural "Spring" Meeting (actually in February) held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the attendance exceeded our expectations by almost a factor of two. Our first two local sections and two additional university chapters were established that year, and the MRS constitution was amended to recognize both local sections and university chapters. A major upgrade of the *MRS Bulletin* was begun; preparations were made for the Society to publish the conference proceedings series, and initial discussions concerning the *Journal of Materials Research* were held. The Publicity and Public Relations Working Group (which later became a committee) was created and began to publicize society activities and, at the end of the year, the External Affairs Committee was established.

In 1984, membership in the Society increased by 70% to approximately 2,400. The Boston meeting was held for the first time that year in the comparative luxury of the Marriott Hotel, and a new meeting activity was established—the first MRS Equipment Exhibit. The headquarters were established and became fully operational. Contacts were made with colleagues in several Asian countries, which led eventually to the establishment of several sister societies in the Pacific Basin

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and ultimately to the formation of the International Union of Materials Research Societies.

This level of activity was possible only because so many people put in countless hours on behalf of MRS. This includes the other members of the Executive Committee (Elton Kaufmann, Bill Appleton, Dick Schwoebel, Kathy Taylor, and Harry Leamy), the committee chairs (Clif Draper, Rod Ewing, David Zehner, Clyde Northrup, Gordon Pike, Julia Phillips, John Baglin, and Harry Leamy), the meeting chairs, the symposium organizers, the headquarters staff, etc. So much was happening that it was almost impossible to keep informed, and the Executive Committee began holding monthly conference calls to review MRS activities. There were no established procedures, policy was made on the fly, and things were done because they seemed to make sense. Activities were changing so rapidly that any budget was totally obsolete, and we were forced that year to pay operating expenses largely out of cash flow. (Indeed, concerns about the obligations we were taking on were so great that the treasurer had to be extremely protective of our meager financial reserves).

The year began with a search for a hotel in Boston capable of providing adequate accommodations for the activities envisioned for the Fall Meeting. In 1983,

it had become obvious that MRS had outgrown the current meeting hotel and that alternate accommodations were needed for future meetings. There were, however, serious questions concerning our contractual relationship with the previous hotel; in addition, the Marriott Hotel was then under construction and not scheduled to open until the summer. These concerns were extremely distracting at the beginning of the year but, in spite of this, a commitment was made in early February to move the Fall Meeting to the Marriott. For the first time, we engaged the services of a professional meeting planner to facilitate meeting arrangements with the hotel, and legal assistance was obtained concerning all future contractual relationships. MRS was well on its way to putting its house in order.

One of our major accomplishments in 1984 was making the newly established headquarters fully operational to handle many of the daily operations of the Society. Prior to this, administrative support had been provided on a part-time basis through Pennsylvania State University by Ernie Hawk, the Society's long-time executive secretary. His desire in 1983 to reduce his involvement led to the decision to establish a headquarters to deal with the increasing workload. John Ballance was hired as executive director in October 1983, and in 1984 headquarters was asked to provide support for a wide range of Society services and activities. With full-time staff support, we could do so much more than had been previously possible. That year, the staff consisted of two people for the full year (John Ballance and Anne Wagner), along with Gail Oare, who came on board in October. How they accomplished all that they were asked to do that year is almost beyond comprehension. A 60- to 70-hour workweek was the rule rather than the exception. For reasons known only to them, they have stayed with MRS in spite of that experience. Access to a competent and professional headquarters staff has been a key to the continued rapid growth of MRS.

The most important activities of MRS,

**Views on MRS and materials research from former MRS presidents**

then and now, are the meetings and technical symposia. In 1984 these were outstanding. The inaugural Spring Meeting of 1984 consisted of only four symposia, but attendance for that meeting was almost 500. Meeting chairs were Gordon Pike, Ross Lemons, and Noble Johnson (Gordon thus became the first and probably last person to serve as chair for two MRS meetings). Paul Peercy, Jagdish Narayan, and Walter Brown were chairs for the Fall Meeting. This event was held in the newly constructed Marriott Hotel, and included 17 symposia and the inaugural Equipment Exhibit (organized by the American Institute of Physics). Attendance exceeded 1,900. New symposia included Fractal Aspects of Materials, Electronic Packaging, Plasma Processing of Electronic Materials, and Ordered Intermetallic Alloys. The plenary session that year was an address on recommended priorities for major new facilities for materials research, given by Dean Eastman, co-chairman of the Major Materials Facility Committee. Notable also was the presentation of the Von Hippel Award to Walter Brown, followed by his award address, "Satiableness, Curiosity and Scientific Progress," which will long be remembered by those privileged to be in attendance.

Yes, a lot happened in MRS in 1984, and it was a great year for me personally, too. I look back with nostalgia on my personal interactions with so many dedicated and competent people, and I am still amazed at how responsive they were to my never-ending requests for their time. I feel gratified that so many of the activities we started then have continued to the present, and I'm also very glad to see that so many of the people who became active with MRS during that period are still among its most active members. I would never have predicted that MRS would continue to grow as it has, and I can only imagine what the future will bring. It is clear, however, that MRS, through its interdisciplinary technical meetings and symposia, provides a necessary service to the world community of materials research professionals, and that the need for that service will persist far into the future.

*Woody White is a staff member in the Solid State Division at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where he serves as Group Leader of the Ion-Solid Interactions Group.* □

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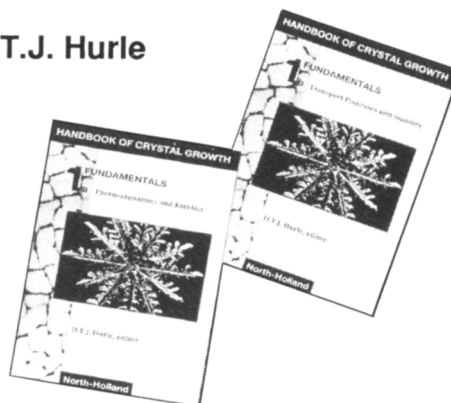
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