

THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC GLASSBLOWERS SOCIETY

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President's Report

I would like to thank all of the Directors for their effort in attending this year's meeting. I know that times are hard and personal time is valuable. However, it is dedicated members like you that make the Society what it is. Thank all of you for your continued support.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Marilyn, Dave, Jim and Rick for their work on the Publications Committee. They are a very strong group and a very valuable resource to the ASGS. They do a lot of work that is often unnoticed. They are instrumental in putting together each publication of Fusion along with many other documents.

As all of you know, our membership has continued to fall over the past years. In order for us to survive, we needed to make some changes. The first step in this process was to re-design and update the brochures. The new brochures included the new member classification of artistic member as well as much needed updates. I would like to thank Marilyn Brown and Dave Smart for their efforts on the brochures. Their dedication is much appreciated. I would also like to thank Jim Hodgson, Rick Smith and Cindy Hopper for their work on updating the membership application. The changes made the application more up to date, more streamlined and less complicated.

After the brochure update, some of our vendors have been mailing the new brochures to their customers that are glassblowers who are not currently members of the ASGS. We have had some success in this process. I hope to see more results in the near future. In addition to the vendor mailing, I had asked all of the Directors to call members from their Sections that did not re-join from the previous year. To date, I have not received much feedback and am very disappointed with the lack of feedback. Hopefully, we will have more information at the meeting today.

This year, the ASGS has also promoted the ½ price membership dues for the new members or a member who has not been a member for 5 years. I feel this is a good marketing campaign and that the ASGS should do this every year starting half way through the calendar year. A good starting date would be around the annual Symposium. Also, instead of charging membership and non-membership registration fees at the Symposium, I would like to suggest that when a non-member comes to the Symposium, the ASGS should offer a member application for completion prior to registration. The non-member could pay ½ of the year's membership dues and become a member instantly and register at the member rate. The non-member would then be added to the roster as a member and mailed a membership notice for the next year. This would not cost the ASGS anything extra as the member would only benefit from being a member only ½ of the year.

I know that most of you feel I am continually harping on membership. However, at the loss rate the ASGS is currently experiencing, the Society will most likely cease to exist in the next 5 – 10 years. Since I have become President, I have re-read all Presidents' letters and Committee Reports since 2000. The letters and reports have all stated the same thing – that the membership is declining and the ASGS must do something. Another alarming factor is that the ASGS now has only 78 Associate Members. The ASGS does have a group of hard core dedicated vendors that show every year. However, at this point, the vendors are there for customer relations instead of new business. Like all other businesses, these vendors will at some point have to determine if their participation in the ASGS is beneficial or not. What a devastating blow it would be to our Society to lose their support and participation.

I would appreciate and embrace any suggestions that would help to increase the membership and help the ASGS continue as a viable society. I will also be asking the Membership Chair and Outreach Chair to take a more active role in recruiting new members.

The internet is becoming our window to the world. The ASGS needs to take full advantage of all opportunities to use this tool to our benefit. On the flip side, the ASGS must also be careful in how we use this tool. Remember that people can see in just as we can see out. The ASGS must position the society to compete in this age of technology.

Since becoming President, I have had the opportunity to attend only one meeting. I would like to thank Victor and Pat Mathews and the Pacific Northwest Section for their great hospitality. This meeting was a great meeting – good turnout, demonstrations, and hospitality. I also had the opportunity to meet members that I do not normally see at the National or Southeast Sectional meetings.

Although the ASGS faces many challenges in continuing as a viable organization, I am up for the task. It will take all of us working together as a team. Are you up for the challenge?

Regards,

Gene Nelson
ASGS President