



The American Scientific Glassblowers Society

President's Report

To The Board of Directors

Fellow Officers & Directors,

Momentum towards the tangible growth of this Society began with the work of Treasurers' Prash and Hodgson's due diligence of our financial situation and the subsequent discovery of the prior National Office's malfeasance. During this painful process, several other problems addressed by prior boards include:

- The transformation of Symposia from a loss leader to a major source of revenue.
- The Section's funding of their Director travel expenses has brought consolidation of smaller Sections. This process has been painful but necessary towards making this board more representational of its membership and towards keeping our operating expenses within our membership revenues.
- The acquisition of the McCain publishing contract has ushered in a significant reduction in costs and upgrade in quality towards our publications.
- The creation of the Exhibitor's Section has provided an equitable solution to use the talents and the business resources of sponsors and exhibitors who have been supportive of the ASGS mission. Their valuable experience and input now has a voice on the board.
- Our Bylaws have been reviewed and upgraded.
- Our mailing lists have been expanded and upgraded and a systematic process to maintain and grow this resource is in place.

I have had the honor and distinction of serving the Presidents' Hatz, Coyne and Powell. Each of these Presidents came to office with a pending crisis in place and each of them, along with the efforts of a diligent board, worked to bring the organization into safer harbors.

Subsequently, when I came to office in June, I was reasonably free of the crisis mode my predecessors faced. As such, I along with then President Powell and the incoming President-elect Bankroff prepared a Mission and Goals statement for the Society, which the Board accepted by unanimous consent and I have included in the report book as a reference.

The following is a review of these initiatives

1. Maintain fiscal responsibility

- A fiscally responsible budget was put into place.
- We continue to work within our operating budget.
- A transition is in place for a new Treasurer.

- Deposits and transactions are reported on a timely and regular basis
- *The Audit Committee still needs a more defined mission and requires a framework to review revenues and expendables that can work towards the goals of the Society. What has to be defined is how extensive a review should be.*

2 Evaluate and upgrade member services

- The Audio/Visual Committee has been fully funded for upgrade and the equipment and materials are in the committee's hands.
- Publication's is actively providing PDF back-ups of all current publications as a post-production cost. In addition, abstracts now preface all current and future articles for Fusion and the Proceedings.
- The Membership Committee is expanding its database with the aid of the National Office to track current and past membership and is providing the Board w/ quarterly updates.

3 Find new revenue sources

- The Supplier's Guide continues to add links.
- The Board has a proposal for mail & label services to advertisers.
- The Board has a proposal for the sale of digital archives.
- The National Office has actively canvassed past advertisers.
- Restitution for recovery of embezzled funds continues and these revenues are being invested in a diverse manner.

4. Increase Membership

- A systematic mailing to canvas membership interests and to secure a verifiable mailing list composed of present, past and all section members was recently completed.
- A database that tracks how contact is made and the respondent's field of interest is being tracked.
- To date there have been over 1,500 cards issued in mailings and at events.
- As a result the responses have been better then expected:

Mailings sent by National Office	998
Cards distributed at the Sections	650
Responses to date	179
Responses from National Office	114
Responses from Section	65
Respondents Non-National Member Only)	12 (9 former 3 Section

Fields of Inquiries

Technical Resources	65
Books & Journals	54
Seminars	53
Videos	53

• **However, despite numerous requests in forms of memo's emails, reports and phone calls from this officer and the National Office, much of the follow through on this endeavor from the Committee Chairs and the Directors is dysfunctional and lays in a state of inertia.**

- I have repeatedly asked Chairs & Directors to review and upgrade their web sites and to update contact information. Many of these sites are embarrassingly deficient¹. These requests have seemingly been ignored.
- In August, the National Office and I informed Chairs and Directors that the canvas cards would be ready in short time and we would require at least cover letters to supply information requests from the possible inquiries. This too was met with little or no response.
- Despite the apparent inertia, it should also be noted that there is a core group of Chairs and Directors who are meeting their obligations.
- However, the ASGS marketing objectives clearly stated and affirmed at the June board meeting requires that overall success require timely efforts across the board that work in tandem with the National Office. Their job is to provide contacts and to list them. It is the Board's responsibility to further those efforts by providing the National Office and its members with information regarding services.
- It is vitally important that the National Office be provided a way to respond to inquiries because we know that to most uninformed people it will be assumed they are the ones who are non-responsive.
- This dysfunctional situation is demoralizing. Most especially when the work of people who have put in the time and effort is diminished. In addition, money and time put towards marketing and gaining the trust and goodwill of both present and prospective members are not only being wasted; ironically it would appear we are paying for the privilege of making a bad impression.
- While I am cognizant that this is a volunteer organization, I am also convinced that these are not overly burdensome tasks. I am asking for accountability and what is for most cases one or two hours worth of work for Directors & Chairs to review their web site, make appropriate changes and to supply the National Office with timely information in form of a cover letter.

5. Preserving the legacy of the ASGS

- I am glad to report this is being done on many fronts.
- The AV Committee is undertaking the conversion of our old VHS formats to digital.
- A newly formed Archive Committee was formed under the guidance of Joe Gregar. The past Proceedings and Fusions are being transferred to PDF files and probable distribution by Jan 04
- Michael Palme has assumed the position of Administrative Assistant to upgrade and maintain form and documents on the Officers Only page.
- Publication is preserving all ongoing publications in PDF.

¹ See Outreach page and various Section pages.

- Committee Reports and BOD Reports will be saved in PDF.
- Education Committee is reviewing past publications and has begun to make additions to our Cumulative Index.
- A Lawyer still has not been assigned the task of defining copyright. However, I will ask the Board for further guidance in this matter.

In summation, I perceive that we are on the precipice of making profound changes that can improve the ASGS at every level. We now have in place, all of the tools and resources to restore the ASGS to a more secure level and build beyond expectations by using our untapped resources more efficiently. However, I also perceive that we have been too long accustomed to being a dysfunctional organization. And we seem more accustomed towards aimlessly shifting time and resources to handle set-backs and emergencies such as: Turmoil from past National Offices, financial losses from prior Symposia, instability at key committees such as Membership and Fusion Editor, instability from Treasurer turnovers, an overloaded board of Directors and a lack of continuity in leadership.

All of these critical challenges have been met. Yet, it seems the fog of dysfunction is still in place and with all of the tools and resources now in hand, there seems to be a complacency stemming either from exhaustion; or a lack of will or accountability. We need to recognize this and work to overcome this problem I am not seeking to assign blame or discount the fact we're all volunteers. I am proud of all that has been accomplished. However, we must recognize our problems if we're to overcome them. If you need help, this President, the Officers and the National Office are here for you. I urge you all to renew your efforts and participate in this unique opportunity to direct the ASGS to a better destiny.

Sincerely,

Michael J Souza
ASGS President