



System Dynamics NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bob Eberlein

Greetings from New England! The summer is over (at least for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere) and we are getting back into the routine of things. This year it is a new routine for the Society. We are starting our membership renewal campaign out of the Albany office rather than billing through Wiley. More about that later. First, I wanted to take a moment to bring you up to date on some of the things that are happening at the System Dynamics Society.

As you are probably aware, the Society has been faced with challenges in finding a balance between the services it provides and the revenue it receives. Our single most important step in addressing these challenges has been to change the nature of the financial relationship between ourselves and the publisher of the *System Dynamics Review*, John Wiley & Sons. We now have a new contract with Wiley that will be effective through the end of 2010. It substantially increases the revenue we retain from our individual members.

It is by design that the membership services provided by the Society, from individual requests for information to providing support for Chapters and Special Interest Groups to paying for the Forrester Award, need subsidization from other areas. The two primary areas from which we subsidize membership services are product sales and the conference. The new contract with Wiley does not remove this need for subsidization, but it does significantly reduce it. One of the mandates of the Policy Council is to rationalize this subsidization so that we do not unduly burden any of our constituents.

Interestingly, the bulk of product sales has been in the form of the “Beer Game,” which has been a steady seller for almost 10 years now. The

Society first got into this business because it was tough to run the beer game. You either needed to build your own materials, or have a handful of facilitators who owned their own materials come to you, which was quite expensive. The Society provides a complete, professional set of materials and instructions for running the game. The game boards are durable and, having been in this business for some time, we continually wonder if sales will collapse because we are saturating the market. It may be that this is a misplaced concern. Though system dynamics is clearly important, there are still a vast number of people who do not know about it and our potential to reach more and more of them seems stronger than ever.

Still, the “Beer Game” is not the only thing that the Society sells. Back issues of the *System Dynamics Review*, conference proceedings and the *Forrester Seminar Series* of videos are all important products giving people access to key work in the field. We have now added to this a DVD that includes all the D-Memos from the System Dynamics Group at MIT (starting with Jay’s first conceptualization of the field) as well as some key historical papers and many MIT Master’s and PhD theses in system dynamics. You can find more information on the DVD at the Society website: www.systemdynamics.org

This year’s conference was held at Keble College in Oxford, England, and was an absolute delight to attend. Much more information about the conference will be in the next Newsletter (to be delivered electronically), but in case you do not already know it, Eric Wolstenholme received the Forrester Award for his 2003 *System Dynamics Review* paper “Towards the Definition and Use of a Core Set of Archetypal Structures in System Dynamics.”

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David Andersen presents the Jay Wright Forrester Award to Eric Wolstenholme. Congratulations to Eric!

The Policy Council had a productive meeting in Oxford. The most prominent decision made was the site selection for the 2006 conference. I am pleased to tell you that Radboud University (formerly Nijmegen University) will be hosting the 2006 conference in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, with tentative dates of July 23-27. It was a tough selection, as we also had excellent proposals from both Greece and Switzerland. My special thanks to everyone involved for the effort put into this.

The Council also had the opportunity to welcome the new Swiss Chapter and Economic Dynamics Chapter, bringing the Society's total to thirteen Chapters and four Special Interest Groups. In other developments, work is being done to set up a web repository for system dynamics models that will include both a submission and a review capability – thanks to Alex Schmid for taking on this project. There is also work being done to make all the back issues of the *System Dynamics Review* available electronically, either on a CD or via the Wiley site – thanks to Becky Waring for volunteering to scan old issues. A nominating committee was appointed to recommend new officers and Policy Council members and to help clarify the duties of all the officers.

Though there is still much more to tell you about this year's conference, planning is also underway for next year's. The 2005 conference will be held

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from July 17 to 21, 2005 in Boston. A Call for Papers with more detailed information is enclosed in this mailing.

Finally, we had an interesting discussion of diversity in the Society. Diversity is recognized as both important and neglected and it was decided that gathering more information is the best first step. The result of that is a new set of questions that we are asking you to return with your membership renewals that will help us to better understand the nature of our membership.

Which brings us to membership renewal. As part of the new arrangement with Wiley the Society will be managing its membership directly. This means that you will no longer receive any correspondence from Wiley, but instead everything will be sent directly from the Society office. Any questions you might have on membership status should also be directed to the office.

Enclosed in this mailing, you will find a membership renewal form. This is clearly the first time we are doing this and if it is possible for you to return this form by mail with a US\$ check drawn on a US bank that will be the easiest thing for us to process. For many of you, of course, that is not practical. We can accept credit card payments either through mailing or faxing this form, or by registering online and entering your credit card information there. More information on renewing your membership online will be included in the electronic newsletter that will be sent to you by email in about one month.

As always, please feel free to contact the Society office with any questions, comments or recommendations. We are trying to make it as easy and rewarding as possible to become and remain a member of the System Dynamics Society and we are always looking for opportunities to improve the membership experience.

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