

Jose Saravia: Living the basic principles . . . naturally

by Christy Coleman

Jose Saravia, Controller's Office, was surprised on 22 Oct when, in the midst of a busy work day, he looked up from his desk and saw 15 smiling faces staring at him. Those faces were of Dan Senese and the entire Management Council.

"Congratulations," said Dan with a firm handshake. "You have been selected as the recipient of the 1997 Farrell Award!"

Jose was both stunned and honored — and that's putting it mildly!

"I wasn't trying to win an award," he says. "I was just doing what I do naturally inside and outside of work. Without even realiz-

ing it, I was on the right track."

That's just the type of person Jose Saravia is — one to whom employing the principles of the Enabling Staff Culture comes naturally.

Born and raised in El Salvador, Jose's first language is Spanish. In 1987, at age 20, he emigrated by himself to the United States.

"I didn't even know how to ask for a cup of coffee in English," he recalls.

It was Jose's desire to succeed in the U.S. that drove him to learn the English language as thoroughly as he could. After studying it for six months using audio tapes, he enrolled in an English as a sec-

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Celebrating the holiday season around the world

By Rob Glowinski

Communicating with people all over the world is just part of a day's work for many of us here at the IEEE.

Sometimes while you are dealing with questions about a product shipment, a conference date, or other member or customer concerns, a lot of questions may be going through your own mind. What does this person look like? What does he or she do for fun? What's the weather like there? And of course, at this time of the year the most burning question is: How do they celebrate the holidays?

The easiest way to get an answer to some of these questions is to ask IEEE employees who work outside the United States.

Kristel Rondelez, IEEE European Operations Centre, Brussels, shared with The Staff Circuit how she usually spends Christmas and the New Year.

"The whole family comes together on Christmas Eve around the pretty, decorated Christmas tree," says Kristel. "We eat, drink, sing songs, and at midnight the presents are opened, which is a lot of fun. Christmas Day is used to visit those family members who live farther away."

According to Kristel, many people take time off from work

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Holiday decorations dress up Singapore's Orchard Road.

ond language course at Union County College, Plainfield, N.J.

To this day, Jose continues to look up new words in the dictionary and write them down because, as he puts it, "I'm a perfectionist and want to learn the language very well."

Learning English has been a challenge, but he has been fortunate in dealing with patient people who have been willing to help him. He says he likes living in the U.S. because of the tremendous opportunities that exist.

Jose has been an IEEE employee for seven years and has worked his way to his current position — accounting group leader in the Controller's Office. His main responsibilities are consolidating cash accounts and daily reconciliations of cash and credit card transactions.

He is happy in his job since he is doing what he studied at the Institut Miguel De Cervantes in El Salvador where he graduat-

ed with an accounting diploma.

Jose joined the IEEE staff as a shipping clerk. Delivering and picking up packages for 2-1/2 years, he met many other employees. Through one of these contacts, he was asked to help out in Member Services during the membership renewal cycles. He readily accepted, and soon became familiar with the department's operations. When a job became available in what was then Membership Renewal, he was hired to process new member applications.

Jose stayed with Member Services until 1995 when he accepted his present job.

"I have to move and learn new things," says Jose of his migration through the Institute. "As soon as I stop feeling challenged in my job, I know it's time to find a new one. I am constantly setting new goals."

Jose's co-workers were not surprised to learn that he is the newest Farrell Award recipient.

"Jose knows what he is doing and gets the

job done right the first time," says Kellie Long, Controller's Office, who works with him daily. "He is always willing to go the extra mile and help out whenever needed."

"He is an extremely dependable employee and his heart dictates his actions," says Stella Oduyela, Controller's Office.

Jose has set many goals for his personal and professional life. One is to earn a degree from an American university. Also, since he has spent most of the past 10 years in the Northeastern U.S., Jose would like to travel and see more of the country. Down the road, he would like to marry and have a family, too.

When asked what it is that drives him to achieve the many professional and personal goals he has set for himself, his answer is clear and certain.

"Two words: my family," says Jose. "Since they're in El Salvador, I don't want them to worry about me. I want them to know that I'm doing well and I want them to be proud of me." ♦

Celebrating the holiday season

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around the Christmas and New Year's holidays. "They usually have to do 'last days' shopping, which is fun but very crowded," Kristel notes.

All the shops and streets are decorated and are beautiful at that time of year. "Most cities turn their market place into an ice-skating area surrounded by cozy little stables that sell Christmas items or hot beverages," she says.

Kristel says that on New Year's Eve people go out with friends all through the night. First to dinner, then into the city to watch fireworks and after that, dancing until hot cocoa is served in the morning.

"At noon the next day, a family dinner is served, which in fact isn't that great because everybody is too tired from the day before," explains Kristel.

Jenny Long, IEEE Asia Pacific Operations Centre, Singapore, explains what it is like to celebrate the holidays there.

"Singapore is a multi-religion country," says Jenny. "But even the non-Christians celebrate Christmas. Maybe because it is a season to be merry and people get presents and 'pig out' on the holiday goodies."

At Christmas time, she says Singapore's main avenue, Orchard Road, is lit up with Christmas lights and decorations just like New York's Fifth Avenue. All the shops and malls compete to see who has the best decorations.

"It is very warm but Christmas is a little cooler, usually around 85 degrees" says Jenny. "So there is no snow, just a beautiful blue sky."

From Christmas to the New Year, children have school holidays so many families take this time to travel overseas to the United States or Australia. The airlines are packed and it is very hard to get a ticket, according to Jenny.

For the New Year, people go out for lunch or a light dinner.

"The holidays are usually a time to spend with your friends and family," says Jenny.

Even though we may live in different countries and speak different languages, the holidays translate the same way — spending time with those you love. ♦

Strategies for the future

by Dan Senese

You can't get where you want to go unless you know where you are going. It sounds simple and, in some cases, is a very easy process. But for an organization as large as the IEEE and as geographically widespread, determining where we want to go requires considerable brainstorming and distilling of ideas to form a meaningful plan.

I can say with great confidence, that after much work and superb cooperation among staff and volunteers, we have a new set of strategies to help take our organization into the 21st century.

The process started many months ago and reached a climax at the Strategic Planning Retreat last September. Then in

November, the IEEE Board of Directors approved these strategies. Now, the staff and other key volunteers must take these strategies and provide specific objectives and tactics to get us where we want to go. That process will take until next November and then we'll all have a plan to follow for the next five years.

Here are the five strategies and some of the ideas that helped shape each one.

Enhanced value

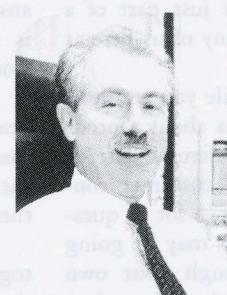
The value of IEEE membership needs to

be assessed. We need to project ourselves better so it's more understandable what we are and that the value of membership is clear.

We need to do a better job of making the value of the Institute clear to members. To some it only means for the cost of membership one gets *IEEE Spectrum*, *The Institute* and discounts on IEEE products and services.

What does this mean to the staff? It means we have to work with volunteers and get innovative on new products and services that are of real value.

We need to differentiate our membership by thinking of the needs of students, young professionals, practicing engineers, tactical managers, and industry leaders, and position products for them. We need to clearly project these benefits in many ways.



Planners improve wine pairing skills

by Sherry Russ

Wine is a vast topic and it's surrounded by so much jargon, mystery and snobbishness that discussing it can be downright intimidating. In fact, choosing the right wine to go with your food can be more difficult than choosing the food itself! Just ask the staff of Meeting Planning Services (MPS), which plans almost 70 dinners a year for IEEE volunteers.

Each Board Series and other associated meetings has meal functions or events where wine is often served. When it comes to wine preferences, some dinner guests may like only white wine, even though it may not be best suited for the dish being served. Some clients forget to consider these things when planning their menu, and it's up to MPS to know how to select just the right wine to complement the food.

"People tend to select a menu that is suited to their own tastes and don't always consider the larger audience," says Kathy Gentile, MPS. "As a planner, it's my job to get them to see the bigger picture and select food and wines that are suited to everyone's tastes."

Membership development

We need to be more inclusive. Opportunities for membership need to be broadened to those in information technology areas.

We have to identify, attract and include potential members from new communities and emerging industries such as the convergence of communications, computer, entertainment and publishing.

There are very specific goals to increase student membership retention by 30 percent after they've graduated — a significant increase over what it is today. Other goals are to increase full dues paying membership by 10 percent and higher-grade membership retention to 90 percent, and to double the number of senior members.

There are very specific goals to broaden membership to more people whose fields are appropriate for IEEE membership. We are not reducing the "standards" of membership.

Finally, we can't just rely on the volunteers to look for ways to increase the value of membership. Seven hundred people — the IEEE staff — need to generate more ideas.

Products & technology

The time from submission of a technical paper to delivery of a peer-reviewed article needs to be reduced dramatically. By "dramatically," we mean to possibly a few months. Opportunities exist to highly mechanize the

To enhance MPS' knowledge of matching food with wine, the staff recently went off the beaten training track and investigated who could help them acquire the skills they needed in this specialized area. They chose the highly rated Ryland Inn in Whitehouse, N.J. The restaurant, which serves French cuisine, has received New Jersey Magazine's top honors in the "Best of the Best" category and its six Readers' Choice Awards.

Jerome Louie, Ryland's director of banquet sales, provided the training that consisted of a six-course meal with a different variety of wine served during each course. As each course and wine was being served, Louie described the wine, explained why it was chosen and the flavors the wine would bring out in the food.

Different types of meats were served to give the staff a full understanding of the interaction between foods and wines. Louie explained the ingredients used and how the meals were prepared, which is important to know when selecting the most appropriate wine.

"You can read all you want to about wine pairing, but you really don't fully under-



• From left: Meeting Planning staffers Laura Wolf, Sherry Russ, Stacy Lehotzky, Kathy Gentile and Lesley McCadden take a break from their wine pairing training at the Ryland Inn.

stand the different tastes, smells and textures until you experience it firsthand," says Lesley McCadden, MPS.

For example, full-flavored red wine is a good selection for lamb shanks because the wine will enhance the taste of the food. However, if fish is served, a lighter white wine will set off the flavors of the fish. But what happens to the wine selection if you add lemon to accent the fish? That could change the wine selection entirely!

After the meal, MPS toured the restaur-

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peer review process and the publication process. We need to provide greater member and customer access to our IEEE products and services over the Web. A lot is planned for 1998, but we need to do more.

We always need to ask, "How can the Web and other technologies help us do things faster, better, cheaper and with higher quality?" This ranges from publishing technical information and communicating with staff, to conducting the business of the Boards.

New authoring tools need to be defined to take advantage of new media. Authors are looking for shorter time between paper submission and publishing. If we can work on better authoring environments for publication processes, including our standards processes, we will become the best at what we do and more people will use our services.

Public imperatives

We have obligations to help educate the public and to provide balanced, reliable information on key technical issues such as the Year 2000 date problem. We need to continue doing this in the future.

Another goal is to enhance the quality of education and foster student interest in mathematics, engineering and the sciences in early educational years.

Awareness and appreciation for IEEE awards and recognition needs to be

increased. It's a difficult thing to do, but we will continue to work at it.

Strengthened culture and image

We need to improve the cooperation, communication, interaction and trust between the IEEE entities and create a more finely-tuned organization that works together.

A coherent IEEE image must be created and presented. Many people feel that because we project so many different logos and images, individuals both inside and outside the IEEE are confused about who we are and what we do. An activity underway in 1998 addresses this and we expect that a more appropriate IEEE image will be defined.

Another goal is to transform our culture to be more customer- and member-focused. Products and services must be tailored to the needs of our members, realizing that there is not just one type of member. We need to do more research and more tailoring of products and services for these various segments.

Full globalization in five years is yet another important aspect. However, we must first define globalization. What do we expect? Does it mean that we will have Member Services operations in every country in the world?

As you can see, these are very ambitious strategies. We must be very innovative to achieve these goals. ♦

Wine pairing

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rant's kitchen and Louie explained the different food preparation stations. The MPS planners spoke briefly with the chefs to gain an insight into how foods are prepped before cooking begins. To complete their training, the MPS staff was given a tour of the wine cellar and learned why wines have

to be stored at different temperatures.

This was not MPS' first training session to sharpen their event-planning skills. In 1995 they spent a weekend at the Marriott Windwatch Hotel, Hauppauge, N.Y., for basic food and beverage training and table etiquette. They learned how to set a table, what the different forks are used for and the right glasses to use for various wines.

As part of their continuous training pro-

gram, this past spring and fall the staff attended Kean College, Union, N.J., to obtain certification as meeting planners. They are being trained on the functions and skills required to plan and successfully manage all food and beverage selections for meetings of five to 300 people.

"Meeting planners need to be jacks of all trades and able to pair wines, too!" says Laura Wolf, MPS. ♦

Ready for a revolution

by Lyle Smith

The world is undergoing an information revolution.

This may be a hackneyed phrase but companies that do not recognize this revolution will be hard pressed to succeed in the future.

"The IEEE must be part of this change to remain relevant and successful in the 21st century," says John Witsken, Information Technology.

The changes this revolution will bring will extend well beyond the paperless office, telecommuting and emailing. It is an all-encompassing vision for doing all business electronically — a vision the IEEE is embracing.

In November 1997, the IEEE's Board of Directors approved a plan to launch the Institute on this journey into electronic commerce, using the World Wide Web and innovative electronic communications services.

This means much more than just having a pretty Web site and swapping emails.

It is an Institute-wide effort toward a vision of overall communication and providing products and services electronically.

The three major initiatives in this plan are all multi-year projects that will provide a strong presence on the Internet; allow timely and meaningful sharing of information among IEEE entities worldwide; and enable IEEE staff and volunteers to process data and communicate in a secure, universal electronic environment.

According to John, the common theme of these initiatives is to "provide and share information in a timely, user-friendly, efficient and controlled manner."

The IEEE's efforts comprise three major projects: the Internet project, the Data Management project, and Workflow/Administrative Productivity project.

Internet project

The Internet Project is designed to increase the IEEE's World Wide Web presence. Among the concepts to be explored are online catalogs from which customers can search and order products electronically,

online membership renewal and application processes, an Institute-wide search engine and direct or indirect access to accurate and inclusive member record information, Web hosting services for IEEE entities to establish their own Web sites, and a Web site reorganized for style, ease of navigation and usability.

An additional aspect of the Internet project is the opportunity to provide free access to an array of relevant information to a wide audience of potential IEEE customers and members.

Data Management project

The motive behind the Data Management project is to promote a timely and consistent flow of accurate information among all IEEE entities. This is closely tied to the ongoing Data Integrity and Data Quality Improvement projects designed to achieve consistent records within the Institute's master database.

Together, these efforts will allow reliable, consistent information to be communicated to all IEEE organizations that need it.

Workflow/Administrative Productivity project

This initiative is intended to achieve a common electronic environment within the IEEE in which staff and volunteers can

communicate and share information easily.

This can be done through email and desktop tools capable of working together regardless of the medium, and imaging tools to convert paper-based documents into electronic formats.

The future

Terms like "paperless office" are tossed about, but what does it mean in a practical sense? Who better to achieve adapting to the idea of doing business electronically than the IEEE?

Exploring these opportunities will allow the Institute the freedom to streamline nearly every business process internally, and promote value-added sales and services externally.

Common business functions can be developed once and used by many throughout the organization. The mountain of information the IEEE has amassed over the years will be easier to access and use than ever before.

This is not to say the Institute will abandon existing products or services and ways to provide them. This is simply a way of adapting to a changing environment to provide the same quality faster, easier and more efficiently than ever before.

"IEEE member needs and expectations are rapidly changing," says Executive Director Dan Senese. "More and more, members are seeking 'just-in-time' information. These needs can be met if we take advantage of modern electronic communication technology." ♦

A quality organization

by Adrienne White

Three examiners from Quality New Jersey (QNJ) conducted a site visit in November to analyze employee awareness of the IEEE's developing quality efforts and to evaluate the staff's level of involvement in the process.

The team, consisting of quality professionals from Northwest Covenant Medical Center, Alliance Fund Services and Bell Atlantic, assessed the IEEE for QNJ's Achievement Award Program. The program's criteria are based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

QNJ encourages the use of quality principles to improve the state's private and public sector organizations. It has become a statewide, private, nonprofit entity funded by donations and run almost entirely by volunteers.

Four focus sessions were held during the team's visit. Forty staff members, approximately half being senior management employees and half being employees without staff reporting to them, were asked their opinions about employee benefits, the

Strategic Plan, IEEE's Enabling Culture and Process Management.

"I thought the questions posed were broad-based and thought-provoking, which initiated in-depth conversations about the IEEE," says Kelly Cox, Financial Services, who participated in one of the afternoon focus sessions.

In 1995, the IEEE went through the first stage of evaluation by completing a self-assessment. To move to this second stage, called the Quality Explorer Process, a 20-page application was submitted. The application asked for data such as general information about the IEEE, strategic planning, customer and market focus, human resources development and management, and process management.

Each examiner reviewed the application to assess the strengths and challenges of our organization.

The QNJ team issued a report based on the findings of the focus groups and individual assessments. Here's what they found.

Strengths

- Awareness of the Enabling Culture
- Improvements to the strategic planning process
- Review of metrics to support IEEE improvements in performance
- Strong focus on customers (members and other customers)
- Introduction of a seven-step process management methodology
- Strong employee appreciation of employee benefits

Opportunities for improvement

- Additional benchmarks and comparative data
- Stronger partnering approach with suppliers
- More widespread deployment of process management
- More widespread efforts in process improvement

- Fuller alignment of strategic planning with organizations

According to the examiners, the IEEE has demonstrated great efforts in setting standards to qualify for future Quality Awards.

In fact, QNJ recently presented the IEEE with a plaque in recognition of its participation in the program during its annual Quality Conference. The plaque is displayed outside the Operations Center cafeteria.

From these findings, planning will begin to improve those areas that pose the greatest challenge. This planning will also assist in preparing the next submission, scheduled for early 1999, that will reflect any improvements made in 1998.

"I am confident that, at a minimum, we will qualify for QNJ's Areas of Excellence Award," says Anne Marlotte, Human Resources, who will prepare the 50-page application. ♦

Succeeding with the Success Sharing Plan

by Cathy Kemelmacher

When the team or the organization does well, everyone shares in the success. And in the new IEEE Success Sharing Plan, this means more than just the satisfaction of exceeding or meeting member and customer expectations, or meeting objectives on time and within quality standards. It means a chance for IEEE employees to have their efforts more directly recognized in their paychecks.

The Plan operates under the concept of "total cash compensation," which is the total of an employee's base salary, any merit increase and a lump-sum payment. This payment depends on the Institute achieving its Measures of Success goals, which are member, customer and volunteer satisfaction, staff morale and the IEEE's net budget results.

According to Executive Director Dan Senese, this plan should strengthen staff teamwork and partnerships by tying a portion of overall compensation directly to the success of the IEEE as a whole.

Under the Success Sharing plan, employees will continue to receive a merit increase based on individual performance. In addition, employees are eligible to receive a yearly lump-sum payment based on a payout rate of how well the IEEE "team" meets its Measures of Success goals.

The plan is being implemented in three phases. In 1997, Phase 1 was a trial run using team measures of success goals with no direct lump-sum payment. Phase 2 is full implementation in 1998 with potential direct lump-sum payments in 1999. Phase 3 calls for the possible addition of

more organizational goals to complement the total IEEE team goals.

To make the Success Sharing Plan a reality in 1998, salary review dates have been moved from the old system of anniversary hire dates to March. Why March? Because such critical factors as Measures of Success surveys and financial results from the previous year aren't available until January or February. Potential lump-sum payments will be made after 1 April but before 30 June.

The planning for the cash compensation levels will begin every November at the Board of Directors meeting, where the IEEE

budget and a total cash compensation budget are approved. Total cash compensation levels will be compared to other companies to ensure the IEEE remains competitive.

The following February, the Executive Committee will approve the goals for the next year and the results of the previous year based on the recommendation from the Executive Director, and, determine the lump-sum payments.

"Since 1998 will see full implementation, I'm looking forward to seeing how effective this Success Sharing Plan will be in providing additional motivation for us all to put the member and customer first," says Dan. ♦

IEEE Standards Activities enters new era

by Karen McCabe

The demands of new technology, the quickening pace of standards development and changing market forces are three factors that made it critical for the IEEE to look for new methods in its standards development processes and programs.

What emerged from more than two years of research and planning is the IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA). The association offers a full range of standards developing services for IEEE members, societies, regions, and industry in general.

Individuals and companies may be members. Membership lets experts outside of the IEEE participate in the standards process and get involved in new standards-related programs for today's industry requirements.

"The association will provide a forum that offers increased responsiveness to stan-



dards interests in the IEEE societies and their representative industries," says Andy Salem, Standards Activities. "More formal partnering with industry, government, and the public interest, as well as regional and societal interests, will be possible."

The Standards Board and the current processes used today by groups developing IEEE standards will remain since they are appropriate for many industries.

"The IEEE-SA will explore additional methods of standards development that may become options for working groups or spon-

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Standards Activities

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sors to consider," notes Judy Gorman, Standards Activities. "Among the areas being examined are contract management services, publishing technical specifications, conformity assessment and company participation."

What are the benefits of membership? Individual members can take an increasingly active role in the standards process—both at the tech-

nical level and in determining the governance of the overall activity. Members can vote for officers of the association and elect their Standards Association Board of Governors.

Qualified IEEE-SA members (IEEE member grade or higher) will elect the association's president. Association members active in IEEE standards development also can vote on IEEE standards that impact their industry.

Even though industry members are not eligible to be voting participants on sponsor

ballots, they can bring to the IEEE-SA Board of Governors and the SA Standards Board issues and views representing their respective industries and companies.

"While maintaining accountability to the Institute, the IEEE-SA brings with it a level of autonomy that will enable it to be responsive to an increasingly broad constituency of parties interested in the IEEE and specifically, standards-related activities," says Andy. ♦

Profile: Human Resources

Better service through technology

by Judith Babeu

Just as the IEEE has been changing to provide better service to members and customers, Human Resources has reorganized to improve service to employees. Human Resources now consists of four areas: Benefits, Employee Development and Relations, Recruitment and Supervision Processes, and Special Activities.

"The key to our being able to provide better service is technology," says Anne Marlotte, Employee Development & Processes. "It's allowed many exciting changes to take place."

Streamlining the process

Employment applications are being converted from paper to electronic forms. Beginning in the first quarter of 1998, job applicants will enter their employment information onto a data-entry screen. The "official" online application will then be printed and signed. Once hired, information about new employees will be available electronically and the electronic profiles can be used for their future career moves within the IEEE.

All employees will be able to use a PC located in the Human Resources area to update their profile with job-related information such as additional education they've received, new job responsibilities or new skills learned. This information will enable hiring managers to learn more about individual professional backgrounds when employees apply for new positions.

Using the Web

The Eye on the Institute Web site is another key tool being used by Human Resources.

Every month, a growing number of documents and forms is being added to the Human Resources Web pages.

For the Washington and New York offices, this means staff members will be only a computer screen away from the same information and processes available to the Piscataway staff.

One of the most important manuals, the Employee Handbook, has been updated and is online. Because this document undergoes continuous modifications, employees will always access the latest version.

During the first quarter of 1998, the Supervisors Handbook will go electronic. The handbook will include the same methods and procedures currently covered in the "Supervision Processes, the IEEE Way" workshop.

The Personnel Requisition Form is already online, along with the Car Pool and Vehicle I.D. forms. More will be going up on the Web during the first half of 1998.

The human aspect

"By having much of the routine work involved with processing forms and paperwork now computerized, the Human Resources staff is becoming more involved with enhancing the 'human' aspect of its job," says Marsha Sacks, Recruitment & New Employee Processes.

One program launched to help employees better understand each other is the Myers-Briggs Assessment. Through special indicators, this tool helps employees in four key relationship areas: understanding themselves and their behaviors, appreciating others so as to make constructive use of individual differences, communicating more effectively with supervisors, peers and other employees, and improving teamwork.

Many departments already have used the assessment to help with team building. It gives team members a tool to identify differences and how different people perceive the world.

Two new developmental tools have been created. One is the 360-degree feedback process. Here, peers, subordinates and supervisors provide their perceptions about each individual employee's behavior. The other is the technical proficiency questionnaire, designed to identify which technical



• Top row from left: Casey Della Salla, Patrice Ventura, Tim Sotomayor, Janice Porter, Kristin Mugan, Don Curtis, Halina Borek. Second row: Judith Babeu, Victor Siuzdak, Terry Proetto. Bottom row: Stella Paone, Marsha Sacks, Anne Marlotte. Doug Razzano (not in photo).

skills need improvement.

Beginning next year, career development counseling will be added to the menu of services for IEEE employees. Counselors in Human Resources will help employees identify potential career paths and create a developmental plan. To assist employees when they apply for another position within the IEEE, they will be taught practical skills such as interviewing and resume writing.

Enhancing benefits

One significant change made this year to employee benefits is the waiting period for 401(k) Plan contributions. New employees can now enroll in the plan during the first pay period after 30 days on the job. Plan participants can now change their contribution percentage once a quarter instead of once a year.

"Employees told us they wished they had more flexibility and that is what we tried to accomplish," says Victor Siuzdak, Benefits.

Employee benefits information is now on the Web, too. Links to various benefit plan providers' Web pages give employees the freedom to check out information from their PCs.

401(k) plan information such as daily fund performances along with interactive retirement planning education can be found on the T. Rowe Price site.

Medical plan programs also are as close as your fingertips. Employees can access the provider's directory, send email to customer

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Making beautiful music

by Nancy T. Hantman

Many employees share an interest in instrumental music. Some perform only for their own pleasure; others perform in amateur or professional groups. This issue shines the spotlight on four musicians based in the IEEE's New York offices.

No improvising in public

Tom Bontrager, Transactions/Journals, began trumpet lessons in his fourth-grade band class. He continued playing through college and earned a master's degree in music performance. Tom has played in baroque and chamber ensembles, and in churches with organ accompaniment. He has even performed with the Metropolitan Opera after studying with the orchestra's principal trumpet player. Tom still practices regularly and performs in public, although he says, "I don't improvise in public."

Also a chess enthusiast, he sees connections among music, chess and science.

While Tom is interested in music aesthetics and enjoys socializing with other musicians, for him "music is absolute."

Since different pieces suit different moods, Tom likes to play and listen to a variety of works. One of Tom's favorites is Mahler's *Third Symphony*.

Five-finger exercises

A player of five different instruments, Linda Geppert, *IEEE Spectrum*, once considered becoming a concert pianist. She began plunking out songs on a neighbor's piano when she was 6. By the time she was in high school, Linda was practicing three to four hours a day. She would learn difficult pieces for each hand separately then painstakingly put the whole work together, one phrase at a time.

As the stress of piano recitals — and the attraction of math and science — increased, Linda moved to a career in physics. Noting a strong link between music and science, Linda says, "Music is really mathematical." Her favorite composer is Bach. "He is scientific in the construction of his music," she observes.

While working for IBM, Linda took guitar

People page

lessons. When a local church needed someone to accompany the choir, she taught herself to play the organ — an older model with pedal pumps. And when her daughter's marching band needed a glockenspiel player, she took up that instrument, too. "If you can play the piano, you can play the glockenspiel!" says Linda.

Having a daughter who is an accomplished flutist, Linda is pleased that two of her four grandchildren are either taking music lessons or playing the keyboard for fun. The beat certainly goes on in this family.

It's all in the melody

Gadi Kaplan, *IEEE Spectrum*, plays several instruments and roles within the music world. As a child, he learned to play the recorder. After attending Israel's Philharmonic youth concerts, he got hooked on classical music, and subsequently organized and conducted the high school choir.

At 18, he began taking piano lessons. As a member of a military entertainment unit, Gadi went to community sing-alongs and conducted a military choir at special kibbutzim events and elsewhere. As part of his mission to make merry, he learned to play the accordion and still plays it occasionally. But Gadi decided that music was not the profession for him and because he was good at math, he pursued an engineering career.

He continued to practice, however, and improvised works. He also took composition lessons with a professional composer. Only a few of Gadi's works have been performed, and even fewer recorded, but some of his

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Wedding Bells

Luz Orozco, Distribution Operations, married Jose Molina on 27 Sept.

Christopher Currie, United States Activities, married Susie Powell on 4 Oct.

Andrea Hausner, Standards, married Charles Lehman on 5 Oct.

Stork Alert

Gina Stulec, Controller's Office, has a new son. Jacob Anthony was born on 16 Sept.

Janet Were, Marketing, has a new son. George Kennedy was born on 1 Oct.

Eric Tuppatsch, Information Technology, is a new father. Matthew John was born on 9 Oct.

Debbie Blazek, IEEE Signal Processing Society, is a new mother. Benjamin was born on 15 Oct.

Robin Morton, also of Marketing, is a new mother. Samantha Rose was born on 16 Oct.

Phyllis Buchta, Inspec, has a new daughter. Alissa Marie was born on 23 Oct.

Nancy DeBlasi, also of IEEE Signal Processing, is a new mother. Francis John was born on 14 Nov.

Service Awards

(July through September)

5 Years: **John Denuto**, **Peter Lewis**,

Alicia Martin, **Rochelle Stern**

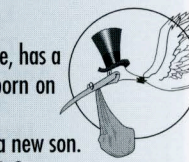
10 Years: **Virginia Arocho**,

Rose Neliden,

Gilberto Santiago

20 Years: **Rita Elefania**,

Dorothy Rodriguez



Retired

Jack Demetris, 18 years of service.

Welcome Aboard

Darlene Alberti, IEEE Spectrum

Stacey Anderson, Marketing

Migdalia Arocho, Non-U.S. Operations

Lucia Baker, Awards & Fellow

Joel Basco, IEEE Communications Society

Elizabeth Bretz, Editorial

Mary Ann Erazo, U.S. Operations

Nicole Evans, Publications

Sondra Ferenchak, Customer Service

Patricia Gerdon, Standards

Elizabeth Giaimo, Financial Services

Debra Gould, U.S. Operations

Noelle Humenick, Standards

John Hunt, Facilities

Diane Johnson, IEEE Communications Society

Robert Jones, Information Technology

Willie Jones, Editorial

Jih-Forg (Jeff) Kao, Information Technology

Pushpa Krishnaswamy, Standards

Jennifer Lambert, Conference Services

Patricia Maurath, Member Services

Barbara Mergner, U.S. Operations

Douglas Michaels, U.S. Operations

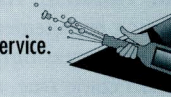
Alan Novak, Facilities

Sudheer Pabbatireddy,

Information Technology

Patricia Pena, Publications

Sheree Van Vreede, Publications



You must have been a beautiful baby!

Who did this cuddly tot grow up to be? (Clue: This New York baby has a "rewarding" job.) Email your best answer to Kathy



Kowalenko and perhaps you'll win a prize for being the first to guess correctly. The employee's identity and the winner will be announced in the next *Staff Circuit*. The baby in the third quarter 1997 issue was Mike Chaykovsky, U. S. Activities. The first person to identify him was Marnie Clark, U.S. Activities. Thanks to all who participated.

Beautiful music

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

pieces were performed at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York.

The abstraction of music attracts him, yet, when he improvises, he has to produce a sound that will "make sense." In his view, a good melody has it all because it embodies the vital elements of pitch, rhythm, harmony and structure.

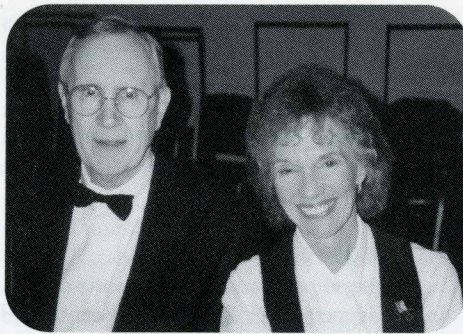
Gadi owns a Beckstein piano made in 1897 and remodeled in the early 1960s in England. While such giants as Bach, Mozart, and Ravel are his favorite composers, he attends operas and recitals by various composers and performers.

How do you get to Carnegie Hall?

Carole Swaim, Communications Society, would answer the famous question with "audition and practice, practice, practice."

Now a member of the Oratorio Society of New York, she first heard of the group when her son, David, treated her to a performance of Handel's "Messiah" at Carnegie Hall. She continued to attend their concerts and was recruited to audition — a moment at which "time stopped" for her. At her formal audition in 1990, her rendition of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" won her a place in the alto section. She still can't believe it, even if she now is the section leader!

An enthusiastic participant, she had 150



• G. Allan Ledbetter and Carole Swaim at an Oratorio Society performance.

family members and friends in the audience for her first "Messiah."

Frequent practice ensures Carole's position with the Oratorio Society, which rehearses weekly. On her own, however, she listens to CDs and uses a keyboard to prepare her for the three yearly Carnegie Hall concerts. As part of a select group within the larger society, she also has traveled to other countries to perform, and this summer sang in London's Westminster Abbey.

Carole began singing in high school, both in the chorus and with an a cappella group. Later she informally sang with her husband and children. As Carole gets older, her singing engagements with the Oratorio Society are increasingly important to her. "It is a dream come true, although I hadn't even formulated the dream!" says Carole. ♦

Profile

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

service representatives, and learn about special health-enhancing programs.

"The Benefits area has tried to better meet the varied needs of our staff as expressed in recent employee surveys," notes Victor.

Quality College

Improvements are being made to Quality College schedules and course offerings. New software instruction on Business Objects and Lotus Notes is being added. More Zenger Miller workshops will be offered such as "Developing the Leader in Each of Us," "Influencing for Win-Win Outcomes," and "Conflict: A Constructive Approach to Understanding and Improvement." The guest

speaker program has been so successful that new speakers and sessions emphasizing personal well-being are being sought.

Morale-boosting programs

Special activities are just as important to Human Resources as those related to business. Some of these are the bi-annual Reading's Fun Book Fairs, the Holiday Party, Take Our Daughters to Work Day and helping local charities such as FISH.

"Special events like these are good for employees' morale," says Stella Paone, Human Resources.

"We made some amazing changes in Human Resources during 1997," says Don Curtis, Human Resources staff director. "And we plan even more innovation in the future." ♦

Send story contributions
and comments to:

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