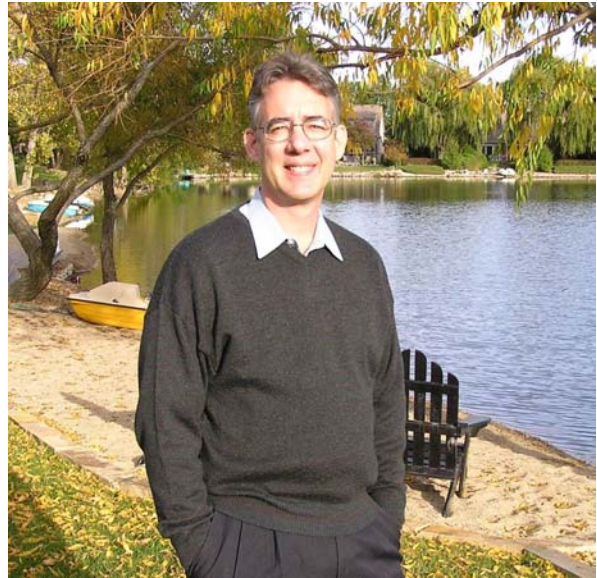


President's Message

I want to thank the members of the Society for giving me the opportunity to serve as President for 2005. It is a great honor for me, and I will do my best to meet your expectations and to uphold the high standards of excellence set by my predecessors. During the year, I plan to use this column to share news about the IEEE and the Society, and to share some personal thoughts about our heritage, the role of control systems in society at-large, and what the future may hold.

As incoming President, I'd like to share a little information about my background. Like many Americans I'm a hybrid, mostly of Irish and Italian descent. The earliest ancestor for whom I have a record was one Francis Carleton, who came to New Jersey around 1760 from County



Down in Northern Ireland and later fought at the Battle of Trenton with George Washington's army. I am a tenth generation descendant of his on my father's side. In contrast, both of my mother's parents were born in Naples, Italy, and emigrated to the United States around the turn of the twentieth century. I grew up in Warren, Ohio, in the heartland of the great melting pot that was the U.S. of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As I get older, I find myself thinking more and more about my heritage and those who came before me. I suppose this is only natural. I have learned some interesting facts about my ancestors. For example, Francis Carleton, as one of the original settlers of Warren, Ohio, was able to acquire a good deal of the land along the Mahoning River, which flows through the city of Warren toward its eventual rendezvous with the Ohio River. Unfortunately, Francis later traded this land along the river for a parcel of land nearby in a town known today as Liberty. I say unfortunately because the land he traded is the location of several of the steel mills that were built in the Warren/Youngstown area in the nineteenth century. Perhaps I wouldn't have to work for a paycheck today if my family had kept that land.

Ohio is known as the "Mother of Presidents" having sent eight native sons to the White House. Very near my hometown, in Niles, Ohio, is the birthplace of William McKinley, the 25th U.S. President. James A. Garfield, the 20th U.S. President, was a student and later President of my own alma mater, Hiram College, about 20 miles west of Warren. It is interesting, therefore, that I found John Tyler, the 10th U.S. President, hidden away among the branches of my family tree. Every American schoolchild, at least in my generation, knew the campaign slogan 'Tippecanoe and Tyler, too!' from the 1840 presidential campaign, which was won by William Henry Harrison, hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Vice-President Tyler became President after Harrison caught cold at his inaugural parade and died a month into his term of office. I will resist the temptation to draw comparisons between growing up to be President of the U.S. and growing up to be President of the CSS but I do wonder how many other CSS Presidents hail from the State of Ohio?

Aside from politics, there are connections to control engineering in my background that may have led me to choose control as a profession. My father was Head of Production Control at a small manufacturing plant in Warren, and an uncle of mine spent most of his career as an engineer at NASA Lewis Research Center in Cleveland. Although not a control engineer, my uncle once told me that he took a controls course from Donald P. Eckman. I cannot say whether these connections to control had any particular influence on my career choice other than to spark a passion for learning and an interest in math and science.

At the same time, I've been thinking a lot recently about the heritage of the Control Systems Society. As I write this message, we are preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the IEEE Control Systems Society at the CDC in The Bahamas in December. If all goes according to plan, by the time you read this message, the 42nd CDC will have been a special event in the history of the IEEE Control Systems Society. Why is our heritage and history important to us? To remember where we have been and those who have come before us gives us a sense of community, builds a common heritage, and a common culture.

Our Society, like the world it inhabits, is increasingly diverse. Our growing diversity comes not only from increased globalization but also from the increasing breadth of the field of control. Today we often attend conferences with fifteen or more parallel sessions covering topics ranging from communication networks to chemical processes, from PID control to quantum computing. We should embrace this diversity, but we should also recognize that people generally like to associate with others who share a common interest. There has been much discussion recently about the declining membership in the CSS. The most common reason cited for this decline is the widespread availability of our journals and conference proceedings online through IEEEXplore. Certainly there is some truth to this. But is it the whole reason? As we become a more diverse organization, it is worth asking whether our sense of community is as strong as it might be and how that sense might be strengthened. What are the ties that bind researchers in these diverse areas and make them want to join the CSS? What can we do to ensure that they associate their professional identity with the CSS? Doug Birdwell addressed this question nicely in his October 2004 President's message when he talked about the importance of mentoring and social networks. In addition, I think that promoting an understanding of the history of our field to solidify a common heritage, as we did at the last CDC, is another excellent way to strengthen the CSS.

Past and Present Volunteers

One of the most important tasks of the President actually occurs at the end of his/her term as President-Elect, which is to prepare a list of Society appointments for the coming year. I am extremely pleased by the excellent group of volunteers who have agreed to serve in various positions in the Society. Some of these volunteers are serving for the first time; others are already serving and have agreed to continue for another year. Our Society relies entirely on the work of these volunteers together with a small but dedicated staff at IEEE Headquarters. The new members of our team will find the reward for their efforts in the friendships they will make, the collegiality they will find, the experience they will gain, and the satisfaction that comes from helping to improve one of the top international organizations for the promotion of control theory and applications.

I want to congratulate Doug Birdwell on the completion of his very successful term as CSS President. I had the pleasure to attend three IEEE TAB meetings with Doug where he did a truly

outstanding job of representing the CSS. Doug of course continues for another year on the Executive Committee as Past-President and I look forward to his continued wise counsel. Also continuing for another year on the Executive Committee are Ted Djaferis, VP for Conference Activities, Rick Middleton, VP for Member Activities, and John Baillieul who moves from VP for Publication Activities to President-Elect. Joining the Executive Committee, as new members for 2005, are Jay Farrell, VP for Financial Activities, Tariq Samad, VP for Publications, and Yutaka Yamamoto, VP for Technical Activities. I look forward to working with all of them over the course of the year.

I want to thank the outgoing members of the Executive Committee for their fine service. David Castañón performed heroically as VP for Financial Activities during stormy times in the IEEE, while Miroslav Krstic, as VP for Technical Activities, greatly strengthened those activities. I want to add a special thank you to Cheryl Schrader for her dedicated service to the CSS. Cheryl has been a member of the Executive Committee since 1999, first as VP for Conference Activities, then as President-Elect, President, and Past-President. I learned a lot from my interactions with Cheryl and I will miss her cheerful presence on the Executive Committee. I am also pleased that Linda Bushnell is continuing as Secretary Administrator. Linda works tirelessly to keep the CSS running smoothly and provides the “corporate memory” that is so vital to us all.

Our Editors-in-Chief, Christos Cassandras of the TAC, Frank Doyle of the TCST, Dennis Bernstein of the Magazine and Pradeep Misra of the Eletter are also continuing members of the Executive Committee, and I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful jobs they are all doing. The quality and impact of our publications continues to grow thanks to the hard work of these dedicated volunteers and the work of their editorial boards.

Our Board of Governors consists of 24 members, 18 elected to three-year terms and 6 appointed to a one-year term by the President-Elect. This means that 6 elected and 6 appointed members are replaced each year. I want to thank the elected members who completed their terms at the end of 2004, namely, R. Barmish, T. Georgiou, M. Krstic, P. Misra, H. Nijmeijer, and B. Wittenmark, as well as the appointed members who served in 2004, specifically, C.T. Abdallah, A. Banaszuk, W.B. Gong, K. Hoo, K. Kozlowski, and S.S. Ge. Finally, I want to extend a warm welcome to the newly elected BoG members D. Tilbury, C.G. Cassandras, L. Pao, D. Castañón, D. Lawrence, and K. Hoo, and to the 2005 appointed BoG members Chaouki Abdallah, Eyad Abed, Frank Allgöwer, Fariba Fahroo, Eduardo Misawa, and N. Sundararajan.

In addition, our Conference Editorial Board (CEB), under the capable direction of Thomas Parisini, continues to expand its role in reviewing submissions to our major conferences. I want to thank Thomas and the entire board for their efforts on our behalf.

Looking Back at 2004

The past year was a good one for the Control Systems Society. The ACC was held in an excellent location at the Boston Sheraton Hotel, and the conference was a great success with Jason Speyer as General Chair and Lucy Pao as Program Chair. Taipei, Taiwan was host to the joint CCA/ISIC/CACSD, which attracted over 400 participants. The respective organizers, Shinji Hara and Li-Chen Fu (CCA), Sam Ge and Tariq Samad (ISIC), and Michael Sebek and Sebastian Engell (CACSD) are to be congratulated for a job well done. Our experience has been that holding these meetings jointly results in considerable synergy as well as improved efficiency in organization, and less financial risk to the Society. In the future, we may see the joint CCA/ISIC/CACSD become a regular event.

Update on OFAC

I know that many of you have been following with great interest the developments with regard to OFAC constraints on the IEEE and on IEEE members from countries that are under U.S. trade embargo. I am pleased to report that, as of October 9, 2004, the IEEE re-established electronic communication for members in these countries. This means that members in embargoed countries will receive their IEEE renewal packages, they will be able to access their IEEE publications subscriptions through Xplore, and they will no longer be excluded from consideration for various grades of membership including Senior Member and Fellow. Organizers of local events in these countries will also have access to all information and guidelines that IEEE makes available on the web for such purposes. A letter from 2004 IEEE President Arthur Winston went out to all IEEE members in Iran, Cuba, and Sudan informing them of the change. This is, of course, a very positive development and we hope that CSS members in these countries will choose to reconnect with our Society and its activities. I will pass along additional information as it becomes available.

Looking Ahead to 2005

In 2005, the CDC will be held in Seville, Spain jointly with the European Control Conference (ECC). This is the first time that the CDC and ECC have been combined. Eduardo Camacho as General Chair, Roberto Tempo as Program Chair, and their entire team are working hard to ensure both an excellent technical program and excellent local arrangements. Having been in Barcelona for the 2002 IFAC and, just recently, in Madrid for the 2004 CLAWAR (Climbing and Walking Robots Conference), where I thoroughly enjoyed myself, I am excited to return to Spain in December and hope to see a record attendance in Seville.

In addition, we can look forward to visiting Portland, Oregon for the 2005 ACC, Cyprus for the 2005 ISIC, and Toronto, Canada for the 2005 CCA as well as an impressive list of other CSS co-sponsored events. Be sure to visit the Society website (<http://www.ieeecss.org>) from time to time to review the latest information regarding our conferences as well as member activities.

We all understand the importance of feedback and the fact that the longer it is delayed the more difficult it is to effect corrections. Therefore, in closing, I would like to encourage every member of the Society to provide me with timely comments, suggestions, criticisms, and anything you feel will help us provide better service to our members. I can always be reached at msspong@uiuc.edu. I wish you the best of health and happiness for 2005.

Mark W. Spong
President
IEEE Control Systems Society