

## ◆ Arrivals and Departures

On the way to Pittsburgh for the 2003 annual meeting, my carry-on was loaded down with paper: extra programs, notes about sessions, lists of questions to ask Kathy Hoskins and the rest of the Drohan Management team, and contact information for a few speakers whose travel plans were still in doubt. Although I knew that the committee had worked hard to ensure the usefulness and diversity of the meeting, I had a minor case of the jitters and hoped that everything would go as planned.

On the way home from Pittsburgh, I still had a lot of paper with me. However, this time it was all sorts of notes and handouts from the sessions I attended, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of people I met at the meeting, ideas from members and volunteers about sessions for next year, and, because I naturally could not resist, books purchased through the guidance of Seth

Beckerman's wonderful, dangerous-to-my-wallet list of Pittsburgh bookstores, included in the registration packets. I also felt an enormous sense of relief that the meeting had gone well, a deep appreciation of all the committee members, and a bit of postevent letdown!

Volunteering to help with something as huge as CSE's annual meeting is a time-consuming task. It starts right after the previous year's meeting and continues, with very little downtime, until mere days before the current one. What often gets overlooked in this flurry of activity is the meeting itself. The previous program chair, Jessica Ancker, had warned me that those 3 or 4 days are often very busy for committee members and chairs, and she was right. However, I made a special effort in Pittsburgh to attend sessions, as many as possible, and see the fruits of our labor—and I am so glad that I did. Sessions that

sounded wonderful on paper turned out to be exponentially more wonderful in person.

I was truly impressed with the level of preparation and enthusiasm on the part of every presenter. I attribute that not only to their obvious talents, but also to the skill and dedication of the organizing committee members, who often had to get across the purpose and mission of CSE to nonmember presenters over the telephone or via e-mail. (Just one of the many small ways in which we use our communication skills!)

The magnitude of volunteer efforts at CSE is fantastic. Just by walking around at the Welcome Reception and looking at attendee badges, one gets



**Brenda Gregoline**

a sense that CSE has very few members who don't volunteer for something. And although it can be stressful to hold down full-time jobs (as most of us do) and simultaneously participate in the work of a professional organization, the rewards make it worthwhile.

In fact, the rewards make it so worthwhile that another thought crept into my mind on the flight out of Pittsburgh: Now what? Although there were times during preparation for this meeting when I swore I would never volunteer for anything again, I found myself pulling out that volunteer form and thinking about what comes next!

**Brenda Gregoline**

*BRENDA GREGOLINE chaired the 2003 Program Committee. She extends best wishes to the chair of the 2004 Program Committee, Christine Arturo.*

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