

◆ *The Annual Meeting: Lifelong Learning*

I often hear people say that CSE meetings are a key source of continuing education for science editors. People fill up their notebooks, hoard handouts, and send follow-up questions to speakers. No matter how much we're exposed to in our own organizations, learning from CSE colleagues is valuable.

I learned quite a bit at this year's meeting in Atlanta. But I also learned a few things in preparing for the meeting. Here are three:

1. Don't be afraid to venture outside your comfort zone. A number of dedicated CSE members serve on the Program Committee year in and year out (you know who you are). They know the ropes, and they've got not only fantastic contacts but also the power of persuasion to get people to speak. There were, however, a few gaps to fill on the 2005 meeting committee. Some folks outside the core

CSE community had interesting ideas, so I went out on a limb and invited them. I'm glad I did.

The annual meeting covered the bases in terms of traditional CSE topics, but some new committee members livened things up with new speakers and engagingly different sessions. I hope they enjoyed the experience and will want to continue their involvement with CSE.

2. Good things can come at the last minute. Conferences need to be planned far in advance. People need to be recruited, programs need to be written, and hotel rooms need to be reserved. There are also myriad reasons for last-minute changes; that's how life works.



Joy Moore

This year, some sessions that were changed or added at the last minute—for example, that on political interference with scientific research—turned out to be among the timeliest and best. Well, I guess the hotel-room reservations don't really fall into this category. Downtown Atlanta hotels filled up early this year; I hope not too many CSE attendees suffered. Next year, book your hotel early, but don't hesitate to send in late-breaking session ideas.

3. Never underestimate the potential of lofty ideas. A top science editor at National Public Radio? An internationally known macroeconomist? A senior staff member at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention? Jimmy Carter? Well, we didn't actually get Jimmy Carter, but we did find out that if he hadn't already been booked, he would have

been pleased to speak. (His second in command for health projects, Donald Hopkins, did speak, however.) In brainstorming for sessions and speakers, many big names were suggested, and we weren't sure they'd be willing to address 350 science editors. Actually, they were not only willing but enthusiastic. Our speakers recognized the important roles we play in science, environmental issues, and health policy. They were pleased to be part of our conference, and they certainly enhanced it. Always aim high.

Thanks to all the teachers and students who made CSE Atlanta 2005 such a success. And for the rest of you: You're never too old to learn. Join us next year and find out.

Joy Moore

JOY MOORE chaired the Program Committee for the 2005 CSE annual meeting.

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