A close colleague said of the 1997 Annual Meeting in Phoenix, “This is a zoo; but it’s the finest zoo of its kind in the world.” Indeed, the Annual Meeting of the Society has become the largest single gathering of scientists, practitioners, educators, and students whose work or study involves the atmosphere in one way or another. It is the place to find out what is new in the atmospheric and related sciences. It is the principal venue for the commercial and institutional members of our community to display and promote their products and services. It is the best single opportunity to interact with a broad spectrum of colleagues in committee meetings, social gatherings, and the hallways. Many of the attendees reside outside the United States, and this gives the Annual Meeting a strong international flavor. For the many students who attend, it represents a smorgasbord of both science and leaders in the field to be sampled.

Some years ago, then-Executive Director Dick Hallgren realized the need for greater interdisciplinary activity both within our community and between our community and other communities. He began encouraging the various committees of the Scientific and Technical Activities Commission to hold some of their specialty conferences at the Annual Meeting. With this encouragement, the number of conferences at the Annual Meeting began to grow. Total attendance also began to grow. An increasing number of commercial and institutional organizations saw that growth as a business opportunity and began to exhibit their products and services. Many people took advantage of the growing attendance by scheduling committee and other meetings during the week of the Annual Meeting.

The growth peaked at the Phoenix meeting in 1997, which drew about 3500 people. By this time, though, there were 16 separate conferences scheduled, and many of those were conducting parallel sessions, so that at any one time an attendee had far too many choices to make. There began a rising chorus of discontent. Furthermore, it was apparent that the desired increase in interdisciplinary activity was not happening; people were attending their own conferences, and perhaps a few papers in other conferences, but there were no significant interactions between disciplines.

The AMS Council addressed these issues in the 10-Year Vision Study—the Society’s strategic plan for this decade. One of the ad hoc committees established for this planning process recommended ways that AMS meetings could address the increasingly urgent need for the multidisciplinary scope emphasized in the plan. The recommendations of this committee, chaired by Roger Wakimoto of UCLA, were adopted by the Council in January 2000.

Among them was a recommendation to reduce the number of independent specialty conferences at the Annual Meeting, and substitute a small number—two or three—of crosscutting symposia explicitly designed to generate multidisciplinary interactions. This and other committee recommendations were implemented for the first time at the 81st Annual Meeting in Albuquerque. The meeting was successful: there were many fewer parallel sessions, and the two themed symposia were well attended. Total attendance was lower, but not so much as to affect the exhibits program or decrease the Annual Meeting’s value for interacting with colleagues through committee and other meetings. It’s difficult to judge the degree of multidisciplinary interactions; it will probably take several such meetings before such a judgment can be made.

The 82nd Annual Meeting in Orlando follows the format introduced in Albuquerque. Eight continuing conferences are on the program, including the Third Symposium on Environmental Applications, which is one of the two crosscutting symposia intended to foster multidisciplinary interactions. The other is the Symposium on Observations, Data Assimilation, and Probabilistic Prediction. In addition, two special symposia have been planned to honor the immense contributions of
David Atlas and Richard Reed to our profession. And, continuing a tradition begun in Albuquerque, the AMS Atmospheric Policy Program has organized the Second Presidential Policy Forum with the meeting in plenary session to discuss how our community, represented by the AMS, can better serve the weather, water, and climate needs of the larger society.

A new feature in the Orlando meeting is a special Student Conference organized to serve senior undergraduates and first-year graduate students. This is part of the Society’s investment in the future of our profession. The Student Conference has been advertised widely, not only in atmospheric, oceanic, and hydrologic departments in universities but also in math, physics, and other departments as well. It is hoped that this will become an annual event and will help attract the brightest students to our fields.

Among the distinguished speakers at the Orlando Student Conference is G. O. P. Obasi, the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization, addressing the students on the importance of the international aspects of the atmospheric and related sciences and services. Obasi is among a large number of attendees from outside the United States, drawn not only by the science presented in the Annual Meeting conference sessions but also by several special workshops and symposia addressing international topics, held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.

So, the AMS Annual Meeting has become a major event for our community. If you haven’t attended one in a few years, I encourage you to do so. The Annual Meeting is smaller now than it was then—hopefully a little less of a zoo—but it remains the finest event of its kind anywhere.

RONALD D. MCPHERSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AWIPS SYMPOSIUM

An AMS and NWA Partnership

In recent years two different organizations—the AMS and National Weather Association (NWA)—have worked to support operational meteorologists. Now, at one of the symposia at the 82nd AMS Annual Meeting in Orlando, these two organizations are working together toward this common goal.

Members of the AMS and NWA teamed up to plan, publicize, and conduct a symposium on the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS), to be held on 13–17 January 2002.

This symposium could not have happened without the participation of the NWA. In many respects, the collaboration with NWA was an obvious thing to do. Its mission to support and promote excellence in operational meteorology is one of the implied goals of the AWIPS Symposium. And since many AMS members are operational meteorologists and also members of the NWA, this partnership was natural. From the very beginning, both AMS and NWA members and senior management were involved and supportive. The AWIPS Symposium program committee was deliberately a balanced mix of AMS and NWA members.

We sought input from NWA members in developing the call for papers. In addition, the symposium was publicized and marketed aggressively by rank and file of both the NWA and AMS via newsletters; AMS and NWA Internet Web sites; AMS, NWS, and NWA e-mail list serves; and—last but not least—word of mouth. The organizers pursued presentations from operational meteorologists, including members of the NWA. For example, James Hayes’s presentation, “Applying D3D in an Operational Environment,” demonstrates the new visualization package and its role in diagnosing model forecasts as an integral component of AWIPS. In an education and training joint session, Elizabeth Page is demonstrating innovative new means of archiving AWIPS data in NWS offices. Session chairs were carefully chosen to reflect both AMS and NWA involvement. For example, Alan Gerard demonstrated tremendous leadership of a key joint session on “Using the Internet to Enhance Product Delivery and Decision Making.”

The concept for the AWIPS Symposium was originally proposed by Daniel McCarthy of the AMS Board for Operational Government Meteorologists (BOGM).
Ultimately, nearly every member of the BOGM played a key role in fulfilling McCarthy’s vision to have an operationally focused venue to showcase AWIPS capabilities. The symposium aimed not only to be a forum for the exchange of status, plans, and concepts for AWIPS in operational use, but also to increase communication and collaboration among operational users of AWIPS and the hydrometeorological community, as well as demonstrate AWIPS capabilities.

It was also very clear, from the beginning, that several other organizations and AMS committees would be crucial for the symposium’s success. The AMS Committee on Interactive Information and Processing Systems, led by Terry Tarbell, played a big role. Given that AWIPS is the centerpiece of the NWS modernization, it is not surprising that the NWS was absolutely critical to formulating and deploying the hardware and software deployment plan, developing sessions, and ensuring presenters focused on the operational capabilities of AWIPS. NWS employees such as Ward Seguin, Dan Nietfeld, Neil Stuart, and Dan McCarthy were integral to organizing the collaboration. We also were thankful for the vast experience and expertise that AMS Weather Analysis and Forecast Committee Chair Bill Burnette brought to our AWIPS Symposium program committee.

BOGM is seeking to replicate this close cooperation in other initiatives with the NWA. These initiatives include jointly participating in operationally oriented publications, such as the NWA-sponsored Electronic Journal for Operational Meteorology; convening regional conferences and workshops; encouraging combined AMS and NWA local chapter meetings (and other collaborations between local chapters of the two organizations); and developing short articles in the new BAMS that focus on forecast challenges and unusual weather events. This month’s “Map Room,” in the Nowcast section, is the first of these articles.

As chair of BOGM, I want to thank the numerous AMS and NWA members for their hard work in achieving the AWIPS symposium, which should result in improved operationally oriented products and services. Visit our Web site, www.ametsoc.org/AMS/boardpages/bogm/, to find out more about us and review other joint operational initiatives between the AMS and NWA. You can contact me at (703) 588-8628, or Kenneth.Carey@pentagon.af.mil.

—KEN CAREY, chair, AMS Board for Operational Government Meteorologists

COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

CAN I QUOTE YOU?
Helping Scientists Work with the Media

Federal science dollars continue to shrink and each year AMS members and the entire atmospheric and related science community needs to work harder to be heard within the administration and on Capitol Hill. One of the best techniques for getting heard and supported is through positive media coverage of the science and services, educational initiatives, and other special programs.

Working with the media has many unique challenges and some of us may be discouraged by past interview experiences. But if we are sincere and straightforward when talking to the press we get our message out in a positive way. Of course, all of us will do better with experience and a little training.

That’s why AMS is hosting a special Communications Workshop on Sunday, 13 January 2002 from 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. The Communications Workshop is a unique opportunity to build skills in working with the media and to strengthen AMS’s outreach program.

The Communications Workshop will be an interactive media training session, including a panel discussion with leading journalists on getting stories in the right place, at the right time, and with accurate details; hands-on media training techniques and pointers; and discussions on the value of working with the media for the benefit of the science and science funding and refining media and science communications at the AMS.

Sign up for the Communications Workshop as soon as possible. The workshop will be open to all Annual Meeting attendees but participants must register prior to the meeting. More details
and a registration form are available online at the AMS Web site (www.ametsoc.org/AMS) under "AMS Annual Meeting," or contact Stephanie Kenitzer at (425) 432-2192 or Kenitzer@dc.ametsoc.org.

—STEPHANIE KENITZER

MEET THE STAFF

STEPHANIE ARMSTRONG
Director of Development

For more than a decade, Stephanie Armstrong has helped bright, young students obtain AMS fellowships and scholarships. In her current position as director of development, Stephanie is now devoting much of her time to assisting the Society in raising the necessary funding for special programs as the person who oversees the AMS 21st Century Campaign.

"The best part of my job is getting to interact with so many nice people who are at various points in their careers," says Stephanie. "From the student fellowship and scholarship recipients, to the more senior member who is interested in setting up a deferred gift plan in support of Society efforts, it is so enjoyable seeing the common thread that links these people... and that is their love and devotion for the sciences."

Joining AMS in 1990, just as the fellowship and scholarship program was receiving its first set of applications, Stephanie has seen the program grow from awarding five fellowships and one industry under-graduate scholarship to the 44 awards being given out this year. Stephanie feels fortunate that she has had the opportunity to meet more than 400 students who have received a fellowship or scholarship and nearly all of the generous sponsors. And while she has turned over much of the daily oversight of the fellowship and scholarship program to AMS Fellowship/Scholarship Coordinator Donna Fernandez in an effort to devote most of her time to AMS development efforts, she continues to work with AMS Executive Director Ron McPherson in fostering strong relationships with organizations interested in sponsoring fellowships and scholarships. Education is a large component of the AMS 21st Century Campaign and Stephanie wants to ensure that the Society continues to have nationally recognized programs in place at both the collegiate and K-12 levels.

The AMS 21st Century Campaign is a focused development effort designed to ensure a strong future for the advancement of the atmospheric and related sciences and their services to society. Along with education, the campaign is raising funds for programs such as the AMS Policy Program, History of the Atmospheric and Related Sciences, and Public Awareness. Programs such as these are extremely important to the future of the sciences, however, they must rely on long-term voluntary support of AMS members, both individual and corporate, in order to be implemented. Stephanie would like members to know that a contribution, no matter how small or large the amount, helps to make the work of the Society possible, and she is happy to work with individual and corporate members to design a plan that carries out their wishes.

Stephanie noted the numerous efforts that have been supported with past contributions, including the awarding of fellowships and scholarships to the future leaders in the sciences; career videos for middle school kids highlighting the diversity of opportunities and
people working in AMS-related fields; support of the AMS Summer Policy Colloquium that brought together individuals from the private and public sectors for an intense, ten-day immersion in atmospheric policy; and support of the AMS Student Conference that focuses on active areas and emerging opportunities in atmospheric and related sciences and includes invited speakers from the private, academic, and government sectors. She is hopeful that the current development efforts will attract the generous support of members, both individual and corporate, to allow these programs, as well as new ones, to be supported for years to come.

—RACHEL S. THOMAS-MEDWID

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Sterling Fergusson launches a kite on Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. One of the very first employees under Abbot Lawrence Rotch, Fergusson (1868-1959) began working at the Blue Hill Observatory in 1887 at the age of 19 and was employed there until 1911. He organized three meteorological expeditions to Mt. Washington in 1905, 1906, and 1907. Fergusson was well known for inventing and adapting instruments to take accurate and detailed observations in remote locations, including a self-recording rain gauge, long-period recording devices, and upper-atmospheric recording instruments designed to be lifted by kite or balloon. After serving as director of a weather station on Mt. Rose in Nevada from 1911 to 1916, Fergusson was primarily associated with the U.S. Weather Bureau.

Historical materials (such as this photo) in the AMS archives include photographs from the Blue Hill Observatory, records of the New England Meteorological Society, the papers of Abbot Lawrence Rotch, the Jabez Dow Observations, and the book collection of Charles Franklin Brooks. For more information on the AMS archives, please contact Jinny Nathans, AMS archivist, at jnathans@ametsoc.org.
The AMS 21st Century Campaign is well under way and it is time to recognize some of the individuals who have provided the foundation for AMS development activities in recent years as well as those who have indicated their intention to provide significant support to the new campaign.

A number of individuals have, through multiple or one-time donations, provided support in excess of $10,000 to the AMS development programs. These significant contributions have helped to underpin the programs and along with the generous donations of hundreds of others have supported a variety of activities, including scholarships and fellowships, teacher training, public awareness, and programs aimed at international cooperation. While industry and agency support for AMS education programs has been critical to success and is gratefully acknowledged, the contributions from individual members has provided for a breadth of activities in support of our profession that would not have been possible otherwise. We truly thank this list of Founders of AMS development programs.

The new AMS 21st Century Campaign has begun establishing its Leadership Committee made up of individuals who will be contributing to the campaign at the Patron level ($1000 or more) for at least the next three years. The membership on the committee is growing continuously, and anyone interested in joining the Leadership Committee is encouraged to contact the AMS Development Office. At the time this issue was going to press, the Leadership Committee included the following members:
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Renovations Continue at AMS Headquarters

The American Meteorological Society is beginning extensive renovations of the headquarters building at 45 Beacon Street in Boston. This historic mansion was designed by Charles Bulfinch, a famous colonial architect who designed the Massachusetts State House and the central section of the U.S. Capitol. The AMS Headquarters was built in 1806 and originally owned by Harrison Gray Otis, the third mayor of Boston.

AMS acquired the home in 1958 as a gift from Eleonora R. Sears, a noted Boston sports- woman, philanthropist, and pioneer aviatrix. Sears was a direct descendant of Thomas Jefferson, whose journals of weather observations indicated his interest in weather and climatology. Many believe this may have been one of the reasons she generously donated the home to the Society. It took two years to renovate, and the Society moved to its new headquarters on 29 January 1960.

The Carriage House, attached to the main building, recently underwent renovations that were completed in August 2001. It now provides 13 work spaces for the publications department (see Bulletin, 82, 2271).

The AMS Architecture Committee, chaired by Jack Hayes, is overseeing the main house renovations. The committee is soliciting from our members suggestions and ideas for photos and artwork to be displayed in the foyer entrance and throughout the home. Although the home is an excellent example of nineteenth-century architecture and admired by many, the AMS would like a visitor to know immediately that he or she is in the headquarters of the American Meteorological Society. The Architecture Committee will review the suggestions as they develop a plan for decorating the renovated home.

Please submit your suggestions or proposals to Melissa Weston, AMS, 45 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; (617) 227-2426, ext. 250; e-mail: mweston@ametsoc.org.

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