

LOCAL CHAPTER AFFAIRS ARTICLES

The ad hoc Committee on Local Chapters recommended that a column entitled "Local Chapter Affairs" become a regular feature in the Bulletin. The current chair of the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs provides the information contained in the columns. The columns feature news and commentary from Headquarters of interest to local chapters, and tips and insights on effective chapter operations.

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The purpose of the local chapter affairs column is to provide news of issues and events relevant to local AMS chapters. This article summarizes some of the many community education efforts conducted by local AMS chapters nationwide and provides rationale for starting similar programs (if you haven't already).

During August 2001, the AMS Local Chapter Affairs Committee assisted Roberta Johnson of the AMS Education Advisory Committee in surveying all AMS local chapters regarding education programs conducted at the local level. This was done as a part of a broader effort by the AMS Education Advisory Committee to develop a comprehensive picture of the range of activities underway throughout the AMS.

Chapter officers were asked via e-mail to respond on behalf of their chapters to the following questions:

- Chapter name?
- Program name?
- Frame of reference (brief explanation)?
- Who's in charge?
- Extent of members' participation?
- Cost of program?
- Funding source(s)?
- Measures of impact (who or how many benefit/have benefited?)
- When will funding expire?

A total of thirty-three local chapters submitted a completed survey representing approximately a 30% response rate. While this is only a subset of all local chapters nationwide, I believe the detailed responses that were received are an excellent representation of the scope of education activities conducted by most local chapters. I would like to thank all the chapters that did respond. Your input was greatly appreciated and will contribute to a well-rounded report by the AMS Education Advisory Committee.

So what are local chapters doing? There are simply too many shining examples of individual chapter achievements in the area of community outreach and education to share them all in this column. The input totaled over twenty-three pages! However, I will try to share the range of activities represented by the reports from the responding local chapters.

By far and away the one activity that nearly all respondents participate in is support, judging and presentation of awards at local science fairs. This is a long-standing tradition within the AMS and it is good to know that it is alive and well. Many chapters are also involved with one or more national AMS education activities such as reviewing AMS minority scholarship applications, participating in Project DataStreme and Project Atmosphere, as well as the new Water in the Earth System program. Another activity submitted by more than one chapter was the generous donation of books, weather instruments and NOAA weather radios to local schools. Some local chapters are even actively involved in conducting local conferences/workshops and collaborating with other programs including NASA and NSF. The WWW is a common outreach tool where chapters invest a lot of energy in maintaining and updating science information for their local community. Special attention is often given to providing resources and support for local science teachers. Some of the unique activities done only by a few chapters include awarding their own locally funded scholarships, arranging for students to job shadow meteorologists at work and/or attend workplace tours, holding student scientific paper competitions, conducting career nights and job fairs for students, and regularly providing speakers to other public organizations and schools.

It is hoped that by sharing this information, AMS members and other local chapters will gather some new ideas that perhaps they haven't considered in the area of community education and outreach. The national AMS has as part of its current 10-Year Vision Statement the goal of increasing outreach beyond the science community. The goal specifically states, "The AMS must place greater emphasis upon reaching out to the broad spectrum of our public. We must pay great attention to having a positive impact on public policy. This implies that the AMS should have more activities and outreach directed to decision makers, as well as the generating grass-roots public support through education of the public." Local chapters have a critical role in interacting with, educating, and fostering a love of science and the earth-atmosphere system at the local level. By choosing to engage in local community education they can provide a key component of outreach to schools, the general public, other professions, and local governments to mention a few.

Again, thank you for all you already do! Should your chapter choose to endeavor in to new educational outreach activities remember two things, 1) there may be some advice that other local chapters can offer you and 2) the goals of the society are behind you!—*Wendy Schreiber-Abshire, local chapter affairs committee.*

BAMS, Vol. 82, No. 6 (June 2001)

The year 2000 was a year full of elections, and the local chapters of the AMS were among those busy choosing their officers.

Why hold elections within a local chapter? The best answer may be to participate in all the benefits one's professional organization has to offer. The election of officers for your chapter assures the continuance of an AMS presence in the chapter's geographic area.

Local chapters are the lifeblood of the AMS, creating a forum where like-minded people in meteorology and related fields can gather—both professionally and socially—to learn and exchange ideas.

It can be difficult, however, to bring a group together and get enthusiastic participants to spearhead a committee. An informal survey taken at the recent AMS Annual Meeting revealed an almost unanimous difficulty in getting members to volunteer to be officers for a year. Finding enthusiastic people to serve as local chapter officers can be challenging, especially since the position is voluntary.

Whatever the situation, it is possible to expand the list of "eligible" members who may serve as chapter officers. A good place to start is the Chapter Officers' Handbook—a helpful guide to organizing a chapter and tapping into both national and local resources. The handbook can be found on the AMS Web page (<http://www.ametsoc.org/AMS/>) under "Local Chapter Information."

The following suggestions may help a chapter discover the dynamic leadership hidden in their membership list:

- **Know the membership.** In every chapter there are people who like to volunteer, who always have ideas, and who enjoy being involved and making a difference. Chapters can tap into this reserve by encouraging their ideas, actively soliciting their contributions, and asking them to head a committee to accomplish their ideas. Chapters should support their ideas with funds and put them in touch with others who have similar ideas. People like this bring vitality to the chapter and are potential leaders of the organization.

- **Educate the membership.** Does everyone know how to become a chapter officer? What are the particular responsibilities of each position? Does the secretary know that meeting minutes need to be submitted to the Manager of Marketing/Special Programs at AMS Headquarters on a regular basis (and do they know this is part of the consideration for the Local Chapter of the Year Award)? Is an enthusiastic local member and potential officer not a national member? If no, why not? Maybe a member would like to be an officer and is reluctant because they are unaware of what it entails. Chapters should help members like these or risk losing a valuable contribution.

- **Clarify election procedures.** If they are always drawn from the same pool of members, chapter officers already know how the chapter elections are run. Chapters need to make sure their entire membership knows the process and should start recruiting potential officers a few months before the end of May. Elections must be held in April and May, with results submitted to AMS Headquarters by 1 June. The AMS Local Chapter "year" runs from June to May, not January to January or September to May.

- **Be creative and adapt to the unique needs of the membership when holding an election.** Whether the membership is concentrated in one town or scattered throughout several counties, to encourage active interest and participation in the chapter election the information must be spread effectively. Notes in the chapter newsletter, announcements on

the chapter Web site, and chapter-wide e-mail are among the ways to alert members about the annual elections. The Smokey Mountains Chapter draws from a diverse and geographically scattered membership. Prior to the annual election in May, the biographies of the nominees are e-mailed to the membership. Voting is also done electronically as the members send in their e-mail ballots by the election deadline. The student chapter at the University of Oklahoma (OU) has each nominee give a short speech before the ballots are cast, and the student chapter at North Carolina State University posts the ballot for several weeks before the election so all members are aware of who is being nominated.

- **Are the chapter officers representative of the entire chapter?** Rotating positions through the same group of people each year could create chapter stagnation. Chapters should seek out new members and ask them to volunteer, or check with members who have not been active recently and see if they would like to become involved again. A balance of interests—private sector, academic, broadcasting—can bring fresh ideas to the executive council or planning committee of a chapter. Some student chapters have representatives from the various classes. At OU, the second-oldest student chapter, membership has been increased from eight just a few years ago to over 100 today. Consequently, in addition to the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, there are representatives from the graduate school and each of the classes. Depending on the freshman class size, there might be one to three representatives on the executive council.

- **Communicate.** Does everyone know when the meetings are? Are the present members aware of all the benefits that an AMS membership brings? Happy members are more likely to talk about the meetings and speakers and to encourage like-minded friends and fellow professionals to attend the next meeting. Members who attend a majority of the meetings could be approached and encouraged to become more proactive in chapter affairs. It is important to talk about the chapter leadership positions (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer) and their responsibilities during chapter meetings.

The above are just a few of the many possible ideas to invigorate chapter elections, motivate the membership, and tap those hidden talents. Chapters should make every effort to elect officers who are enthusiastic and have something to offer the organization.

Chapters looking for dynamic leadership and a strong membership are challenged to find a talented pool of individuals. Some chapters are blessed with a small group of people who are consistently active and vocal, while others have members who need to be cajoled and motivated on an annual basis. Serving as a chapter officer involves some time in planning meetings, contacting speakers, finding a location, and organizing a fun and informative program, but it is well worth the effort.—*Jenny Dean, local chapter affairs committee.*

BAMS, Vol. 82, No. 4 (April 2001)

The purpose of the local chapter affairs column is to provide news of issues and events relevant to local AMS chapters. This article recounts local chapter activities that occurred during the 81st Annual Meeting of the AMS in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

This past annual meeting was a successful, productive and rewarding time for local chapter representatives and the Local Chapter Affairs Committee (LCAC). Perhaps the most visible local chapter presence was the increased participation in both the chapter abstracts published in the AMS Annual Meeting Program and the local chapter posters on display throughout the weeklong conference. Participation in both these opportunities reached a new high with 20 chapters displaying posters and 21 chapters publishing abstracts. Numerous attendees commented on the quality and variety of local chapter activities that were highlighted via both these mechanisms. This year for the first time the LCAC also displayed a poster. Congratulations to all who participated! It is the LCAC's goal that next year in Orlando, poster and abstract participation will reach at least 30 participants which would represent one-third of all the currently active local AMS chapters. Remember, even if you have no local chapter member attending the meeting to display a poster, you can still easily submit an abstract for the Program. The LCAC views participation in both of these activities favorably when reviewing applications for the Chapter of the Year awards.

On Monday, 15 January 2001 LCAC members met in the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The meeting began by recognizing former member Wayne McCollum for his service to the committee and welcoming new member Jenny Dean. The committee reviewed its accomplishments during the past year, which included publishing four columns in the Bulletin and processing and administering the first ever Chapter of the Year awards! The committee also planned Local Chapter Affairs Column articles for the coming year which will include an article specifically targeted at student chapter issues, another elucidating the many benefits associated with National AMS membership including associate membership, and yet another discussing recruitment of new officers and other annual election issues.

Early Tuesday, 16 January 2001, approximately 50 people representing 30 chapters and AMS headquarters gathered for breakfast and an information exchange at the Doubletree Hotel. Committee chair Wendy Schreiber-Abshire facilitated the meeting and introduced other LCAC members in attendance: Jim Keeney, Sherri Del Soldato, Maj. Ken Carey, and Jenny Dean. Headquarters advisor to the committee, Dr. Keith Seitter, and outgoing and incoming AMS presidents Dr. Jeff Kimple and Dr. Bob Serafin also addressed the gathering.

The highlight of the breakfast meeting was honoring chapters achieving honor roll status and the presentation of the Local Chapter of the Year awards. The following nine chapters were awarded to the local chapter honor roll: Arkansas, Houston, Kansas City, North Dakota, Plymouth State, Texas A&M, Twin Cities, West Central Florida, and West Texas. Congratulations! The regular chapter of the year for 1999-2000 was the Omaha-Offutt chapter, and the student chapter of the year award went to the Lyndon State College chapter. Each was presented with an impressive banner and certificates for each of the officers who served during that time. The two minimum requirements to be eligible for the awards were recounted to those in attendance. They are that 1) the president or chair of the chapter must be a national AMS member and 2) that chapter election results must be submitted to the AMS. A new criterion just added by the LCAC was also mentioned. In the future, applicants must have submitted their meeting minutes for publication in the Bulletin in a

regular and timely fashion during the evaluation period for local chapter of the year applicants to be considered for chapter honor roll.

By a show of hands of those in attendance, it was apparent that use of the Local Chapter link on the AMS Web page at <http://www.ametsoc.org/AMS> was up over the previous year. If you are not already doing so, it is recommended you make use of the information provided there. You can access information on starting a chapter, borrowing taped lectures from the video lending library, submitting chapter meeting minutes and election results, and much more. The importance of submitting chapter election results every year by 1 June was also discussed. Even if the election results are the re-appointment of the current officers, it is important to let AMS headquarters know so they don't assume the chapter has become inactive.

The last LCAC function during the annual meeting was the fourth annual student-mentoring luncheon held Thursday, 18 January 2001. Approximately twenty-five students joined eleven mentors and AMS staff representing various career paths in the atmospheric sciences. The professionals in attendance were Bruce Thomas, Deirdre Kann, Robin Marshment, Bob Davis, David Homan, Maj. Ken Carey, Jenny Dean, Keith Seitter, and Wendy Schreiber-Abshire. New AMS president Bob Serafin and president-elect Rick Rosen also spent a portion of the lunch meeting visiting with student attendees. The purpose of the annual luncheon is to provide the hardworking local chapter student officers serving as annual meeting volunteers with an opportunity to meet one-on-one with professionals working in various aspects of our field. Students and mentors alike continue to greatly appreciate and enjoy this annual activity.

The AMS and the LCAC thank everyone for all the amazing work that numerous volunteers do on a year round basis via local chapter initiatives. Please watch your mailboxes for mailings from AMS headquarters during the coming year. They contain important information including local chapter of the year applications and information on all the activities to be held during the 82nd annual AMS meeting. Next year please either continue to participate or consider having a representative of your chapter attend some or all of these exciting activities during the annual meeting in Orlando. See you there!—*Wendy Schreiber-Abshire*.

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Local chapters are provided with poster space each year at the AMS Annual Meeting. This is an excellent opportunity for chapters to showcase their annual activities. However, very few chapters have been represented at previous national conferences. This article addresses the abstract and poster submission process. The most important aspect to remember is that all local chapter posters are eagerly accepted, even up to the conference dates.

The first step toward preparing your chapter's poster for the 2001 AMS Annual Conference is the abstract submission. Chapter abstracts are due at AMS National Headquarters

by November. The abstracts are then published in the conference program. Abstracts are normally only a paragraph in length. Your abstract provides conference attendees with a brief synopsis of local chapter activities and perhaps a brief chapter history.

Once the abstract has been submitted to AMS Headquarters, it is time to prepare your chapter poster. As a chapter officer or even a member, deciding how to represent your chapter to over 3,000 attendees can be a tremendous challenge. Here are some helpful suggestions for creating your chapter poster:

1. Pick a committee or individual to direct the poster creation.
2. Gather chapter photographs, meeting minutes, meeting announcements, etc.
3. Create a poster outline. How do you want your chapter represented at the Annual Meeting?
4. Assess the software and equipment available to create this poster. There are many ways to create your poster. Remember, your poster is not judged on artistic ability or content. The Local Chapter Affairs Committee simply wants to see your chapter represented.
5. Create a poster that you and your chapter believe best represents its chapter, community and national AMS contributions.

Referring to suggestion 4, the chapter poster can be as simple or complex as local capabilities allow. A more basic poster may only require some photographs and a word processing program. Many chapters have used this method to create outstanding poster presentations. Newspaper articles and local chapter meeting announcements help portray community and chapter involvement. Photographs taken at meetings, chapter functions and science fairs present conference attendees with a visual representation of what your chapter has done during the past year.

If your chapter is fortunate enough to have more sophisticated technology available, then the chapter poster creation process can become a creative experience. Scanners, graphic software and poster printers can increase your chapter's visual capabilities. However, keep in mind that your poster is limited to a 4'x 8' area. In addition, these large graphical posters take substantial computer storage space. Should your chapter decide the graphic phenomenon is the poster for you, ensure that someone knows how the graphics software works. Otherwise, the technical poster may become frustrating and extremely time consuming. For chapters that have the graphic software, but not the poster printer, poster-printing services are available at area print shops. Make certain you check printing constraints before the poster is created on the computer.

The final submission step is actually displaying the poster at the conference. Any chapter member can display the chapter poster at the meeting. In fact, if a local chapter member is unable to attend the conference anyone in the chapter area that is attending the conference can display the poster. Individuals are not required to perform poster presentations. There are peak viewing times when chapter member participation is recommended, but this is not required.

One extremely important aspect to remember as your chapter decides whether to present a

poster this year, is that your chapter's participation at the national conference can be the deciding factor for the Local Chapter and Student Chapter of the Year Awards. The Local Chapter Affairs Committee encourages your chapter's participation this year. We look forward to seeing you and your posters in Albuquerque.—*Sherri L. Del Soldato*.

BAMS, Vol. 81, No. 8 (August 2000)

The purpose of the local chapter affairs column continues to be providing a vehicle for sharing information relevant to local AMS chapters. This article shares a Local Chapter Officer's perspective on the essentials of creating a great local AMS chapter.

Teamwork is the Key! Create a vibrant and healthy chapter environment by putting the needs and goals of your chapter membership ahead of your personal desires and wishes for the chapter. If you're a chapter officer, encourage a get-together with the other chapter officers before the chapter year begins to develop a unique game plan for your chapter and to foster a positive chapter officer climate. Ask the national AMS headquarters, other chapter officers, and a few people in your area for their advice and opinions. Once the officers have formulated their ideas, find a way to bounce it off your chapter members. A survey is one way to get their ideas so you can incorporate chapter member feedback. The October 1997 Bulletin of the AMS (BAMS) contains an excellent local chapter affairs article on tips on conducting surveys. This article is also available under the local chapter link on the AMS homepage, and is part of the Local Chapter Officer's Handbook. Another way to get member buy-in is to outline the proposed chapter schedule via e-mail, your web page, or in person, and incorporate ideas and changes you receive. If you're a chapter member, provide constructive ideas and suggestions to your chapter officers, and help them achieve success! Consider joining forces for a complementary activity with the local Astronomical Society (Packerland chapter) or team up with the local National Weather Association chapter (Omaha-Offutt chapter). Throughout the year, consider new ways to rejuvenate chapter participation.

Activity Diversity. Each local chapter is unique. Find activities that best match the commitment and desires of your membership. Every chapter has a varying amount of talent right at your fingertips! Potential speakers can be drawn from the local community, scientists visiting the area, and the chapter membership. Many industries and utility companies have speaker's bureaus and/or frequently give tours of their facilities. Every community likely has an emergency manager who could explain preparations and planning for weather-related disasters. Every chapter probably has at least one "computer whiz" who could demonstrate the different weather information that can be found on the Internet. Hosting a conference or symposia is excellent; however, because it requires lots of work, your chapter must strongly support it and be committed to its success!

Other chapter guest speakers have included a representative from a local power company (Central North Carolina); a representative from a state highway department who discussed snow removal (Puget Sound and Omaha-Offutt); a representative from the International Ice Patrol--which was established after the sinking of the Titanic (NYC/Long Island); and

a representative from the National Science Teachers' Association (Denver/Boulder). Other possibilities include the sponsorship of an Explorer Post (Omaha-Offutt); staffing a weather booth at the science museum (Kansas City), the donation of weather instruments to local schools (Arkansas), a weather trivia contest (Wright Memorial); participation in highway trash pickup (Oklahoma); acknowledgment of local individuals and groups through a chapter award program (Metropolitan Atlanta), and sponsorship of a high school scholarship (Omaha-Offutt). Several chapters organize and conduct local conferences and workshops (High Plains, Puget Sound and Wright Memorial). Consider these creative ideas too! Take a tour of a baseball stadium and find out how they get their weather information (Denver-Boulder), visit a science museum (Chicago) to enhance your historical perspective, or take a tour of a water management district facility (North Texas) to broaden your knowledge of how your community works. The Los Angeles chapter holds an annual pot luck dinner with members bringing videos and photos to share, while the University of Nebraska chapter has an annual picnic. Go storm chasing with the Greater Milwaukee chapter! Check local theaters for weather-related movies. Some chapters invite the winners of the local science fairs to give their presentations to the chapter. The Palmetto chapter hosts an annual mini-technical conference over a weekend, inviting members from neighboring chapters to participate. Other possibilities include recognizing a "Member of the Year" with a plaque or similar award, often at an annual banquet, or holding chapter contests with some fun weather-related paraphernalia as the prize. Contests could involve weather photography, date of first snowfall, first day over 100 degrees, first freeze, or something else that is appropriate for the area. Showcase the talents of your own chapter members with a "Members Night".

Public Relations, Marketing, and Communication. Everyone is very busy, so why should someone join and be a part of your chapter? Your challenge is to link the Society's objectives with the needs and desires of your local chapter members. Get out and market your planned activities! Chapter officers should enthusiastically communicate their vision and objectives for their chapter. Leverage the Internet and local newspaper, radio, and television outlets to get your activities publicized. A chapter newsletter is a great way to publicize your events and spread useful information. Chapter events should improve chapter member knowledge of the atmospheric sciences and the relationship with and impacts on community customers, research or forecasting activities. Enthusiasm and ability to articulate your chapter initiatives that bring your atmospheric science community closer together are far more important to a chapter's vibrancy and health than anything else. After setting up your next meeting, it is just as important to provide plenty of advance notice of your meeting dates. Use of variety of ways to publicize chapter activities; e-mail, links to web sites, and colorful flyers are a few options. At the beginning of the year, consider a mass mailing to current and other possible chapter members with proposed chapter activities and a survey with a stamped return envelope to reenergize participation. The AMS headquarters can provide a list of national members' names and addresses and as discussed below will even pay for the cost of one mass mailing a year per chapter. You could then send a personalized letter inviting them to join local chapter activities. Consider door prizes to liven participation, and nametags to foster group cohesion and fellowship.

Outreach to Your Chapter Members and Community. Your goal should be to provide value to your members and community. Local chapters are the AMS's representative and link in each of our communities. Treat each chapter meeting and activity as an opportunity to educate each other, foster life-long professional and personal relationships, and provide a valued service to your community. Consider sponsoring a forum to educate teachers and other educators about the atmospheric sciences and to motivate their desire to teach their students about meteorology and its relationship and importance to the world around them. Don't forget to meet needs in your community. Sponsor a scholarship for top performers in school, a blood drive to help meet local and regional needs, seize opportunities to mentor local teenagers, provide weather radios to local schools, spearhead a banquet for top school performers, or learn how airport authorities use and the importance of timely and accurate weather forecasts. Your only limitation is your imagination and ingenuity!

Leverage the Vast Resources of the AMS Headquarters. The AMS Headquarters has a tremendous array of information to assist local chapters. The AMS's Local Chapter web site, <http://www.ametsoc.org/AMS>, has a wealth of information to assist local chapters. Noteworthy items in this web site include: a Local Chapter Officer's Handbook, which summarizes essential information concerning the Society and local chapters; the names, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses of important contacts at AMS Headquarters, and a section on program ideas for local chapters; a directory of every AMS local chapter and student chapter, which includes telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for chapter officers; and information about chapter news or activities that could be helpful to other chapters. The best part of the AMS Headquarters help is someone dedicated to serve chapter needs. Ms. Kelly Garvey serves as the local chapter point of contact at AMS Headquarters. She can be reached at Marketing/Special Programs Manager, American Meteorological Society, 45 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108-3693; telephone: 617-227-2426, ext. 215; fax: 617-742-8718; e-mail: kgarvey@ametsoc.org. AMS Headquarters will also support one mailing per chapter per year to all AMS members in the local chapter's area. The BAMS has a section on Chapter News dedicated to local chapter activities and events. In addition, specific articles designed to enhance chapter activities are provided and authored by the AMS's Local Chapter Affairs Committee (LCAC). To help recognize outstanding local chapters, the AMS Council has just recently approved an award for Local Chapter of the Year and Student Chapter of the Year. Nomination packages will be due by 1 May of each year to the AMS Headquarters Local Chapter Affairs representative. At the AMS annual meeting, local chapters are afforded several opportunities to display their initiatives, to meet other chapter officers, and to meet with professionals in our field. Local chapters are provided a highly visible space to display posters or other information about their chapter to the annual meeting participants. The LCAC sponsors a breakfast for local chapters to facilitate an exchange of ideas. Later during the week, the LCAC also holds the popular Student Mentors Luncheon that provides an opportunity for atmospheric science students to meet with and discuss career opportunities with weather professionals. If you are not involved in a local chapter, maybe it's time to look into what you are missing!—*Major Ken Carey.*

The purpose of the local chapter affairs column continues to be providing news of issues and events relevant to local AMS chapters. This article recounts pertinent events that occurred during the 80th AMS Annual Meeting in Long Beach, California.

Once again the Annual Meeting was a busy and productive time for local chapter representatives and the Local Chapter Affairs Committee (LCAC). On Monday, 10 January LCAC members met in the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The committee thanked Richard Petersen for his service to the committee and welcomed new members Kenneth Carey and Mike Biggerstaff.

The committee reviewed its accomplishments during the past year, which included publishing two columns in the Bulletin, surveying local chapters to find out about chapter-sponsored scholarships, succeeding in having the AMS headquarters video produced, and, most significantly, gaining AMS Council approval to institute "Local AMS Chapter of the Year Awards" for both regular and student chapters. The committee also planned "Local Chapter Affairs Column" articles for the coming year that will address topics such as the new "Local Chapter of the Year Awards," tips for creating a chapter poster for display at the Annual Meeting, lessons learned (both good and bad) by other local chapters, and an article specifically targeted at student chapters. The majority of the meeting time was spent revising the draft application for the "Chapter of the Year Awards." Stay tuned for more information about applying for these new well-deserved awards!

On Tuesday, 11 January, approximately 50 people representing 30 chapters and AMS headquarters gathered for breakfast and an information exchange at the Westin Hotel.

Committee chair Wendy Schreiber-Abshire facilitated the meeting and introduced other LCAC members in attendance: Wayne McCollum, Jim Keeney, Sherri Del Soldato, and Ken Carey. The AMS Headquarter local chapter contact, Kelly Garvey, and Keith Seitter, were also introduced.

During the meeting it became apparent that only about half of the attendees have visited the AMS Web site, which includes a link to all the local chapter support information and documents. If your chapter and/or chapter officers are not using this resource, please give it a try. The Web site may be accessed from the local chapter link on <http://www.amet-soc.org/AMS>. At this site you will find information on starting a chapter, borrowing taped lectures from the video lending library, submitting chapter meeting minutes and election results, and much more. You can even download a routinely updated version of the Local Chapter Officer's Handbook. Garvey stressed the importance of submitting chapter election results every year by 1 June. Even if the election results are the reappointment of the current officers, it is important to let AMS headquarters know so they do not assume the chapter has become inactive.

Of course the newly established "Local Chapter and Student Chapter of the Year Awards" were also discussed at the meeting. A majority of the attendees unfortunately were not aware that these awards were being established despite mailings about the process from

the AMS. It will be especially important for local chapter officers to watch for and read mail from the AMS headquarters during the coming year so they can receive all the information about these awards as well as other AMS and LCAC activities. The scope of the application for the awards was covered as well as the two minimum requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for the awards. They are that 1) the president or chair of the chapter must be a national AMS member and 2) chapter election results must be submitted to the AMS.

The meeting concluded with a viewing of the newly produced 30-minute video A Video Tour of the AMS Headquarters/Meet the AMS Staff. A copy of this informative, professional, very interesting video was mailed to each local chapter in January 2000. Each chapter should have received one copy. If you have not received one, please contact Kelly Garvey at 617-227-2426 ext. 215 or kgarvey@ametsoc.org. This video provides wonderful insight into the staff, functions, and facilities of AMS and would make an excellent basis for a local chapter meeting. The committee is very interested in your comments about and experiences with the video. You can send your comments about this or any other issue via e-mail to amschaff@comet.ucar.edu.

The last LCAC function during the Annual Meeting was the third annual student-mentoring luncheon held Thursday, 13 January. Approximately 35 students joined nine mentors and AMS staff representing various career paths in the atmospheric sciences. The professionals in attendance were Sherri Del Soldato, Ken Carey, Bernard Meisner, Joe Cassmassi, Jenny Dean, Dejan Ristic, Keith Seitter, Kelly Garvey, and Wendy Schreiber-Abshire. The purpose of the annual two-hour luncheon is to provide the hardworking student volunteers, who greatly facilitate the Annual Meeting, with an opportunity to visit one-on-one with professionals working in various aspects of our field. Students and mentors alike continue to greatly appreciate and enjoy this annual activity.

In conclusion, local chapter activities were also evident via the chapter abstracts published in the Annual Meeting Program, which is given to every registered attendee, and by the local chapter posters on display throughout the weeklong conference. Participation in these opportunities was up over the previous year, with 14 chapters taking advantage of the opportunity to display posters and 11 chapters publishing abstracts recounting their activities during the previous year. As committee chair I would like to strongly encourage even more chapters to participate in the Annual Meeting in this manner at next year's meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. With approximately 30 chapters typically participating in the annual local chapter breakfast meeting, it is the LCAC's hope to have at least that many posters and abstracts at the Annual Meeting. This participation goal is still less than one-third of all the currently active local AMS chapters. Remember, if you have no local chapter member attending to display a poster, you can still submit an abstract for the program. Again, watch your mail and this column in the Bulletin during the coming year for tips on creating a poster and other information about the 81st AMS Annual Meeting. The LCAC will view participation in both of these activities favorably when reviewing applications for the "Chapter of the Year Awards."

The AMS and the LCAC thank everyone for all the great work that goes on year round

due to local chapter initiatives. Next year consider having a chapter representative participate in some or all of these activities and during the next Annual Meeting as well. I'm sure they'll find the experience rewarding!—*Wendy Schreiber-Abshire*.

BAMS, Vol. 81, No. 4 (April 2000)

This installment of the local chapter affairs column shares exciting news about two newly established AMS awards initiated to formally recognize the outstanding efforts of AMS local chapters nationwide. Applications for these awards are due by 1 May. Read on to learn more.

The idea of establishing “Local Chapter of the Year Awards” was first discussed by the Local Chapter Affairs Committee (LCAC) during the AMS Annual Meeting in February 1997. Details of the awards process, criteria for judging chapter accomplishments, and the application form itself were iteratively prepared and in October 1999 the AMS Council approved “Local AMS Chapter of the Year Awards” for both regular and student chapters. In addition, the Council approved awarding other deserving chapters who apply for the “Chapter Honor Roll” status. Throughout the year, and at the Annual Meeting, winning chapters and chapters that earn the honor roll status will be recognized as such with special icons whenever they publish chapter news or are otherwise noted in AMS text and Web publications. These notations will stand for a period of one year, until the next awards are given.

The first awards will be given to one regular local chapter and one student chapter for the 1999–2000 chapter term for those activities conducted in the 11 months prior to May 2000. The awards will consist of a permanent cloth banner for the chapter to keep and display and certificates for each officer who served during the application period. There are two minimum requirements that must be met to be eligible for the awards. They are that 1) the president or chair of the chapter must be a national AMS member and 2) chapter election results must have been submitted to the AMS during the evaluation period. These requirements are necessary so that the local chapter is in good standing with the AMS and is in full communication with the AMS about local chapter issues. The winners will be notified in October and the awards will be presented to both the winning chapters at the local chapter breakfast meeting held during the following annual meeting. The first awards will be given at the 2001 AMS Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The application form for a chapter to nominate itself will have two portions. The first section contains a short informational area for chapters to indicate their officers, membership size, and number of meetings held during the evaluation period. This information will be used to put activities in context, but not to serve as criteria. The other section will allow the chapters to demonstrate the extent to which their chapter activities further the mission of the AMS. This will be accomplished via one-page written answers to the following questions.

- 1) In the past year, what has your chapter done for your members?
- 2) In the past year, what has your chapter done for your community?

(Questions 1 and 2 are not limited to activities of a scientific nature)

3) In the past year, what has your chapter done for the national AMS?

For question 3, activities that should be highlighted include, but are not limited to, regular submission of meeting minutes for publication in the Chapter News section of the Bulletin and displaying a chapter poster and abstract at the Annual Meeting that falls within the evaluation period. The human and material resources available to a chapter will be considered along with their accomplishments in the evaluation process.

Application forms for the “Chapter of the Year Awards” will be mailed to each chapter officer during the first week of March. Additionally, the application form will also be available for downloading from the AMS Web site at <http://www.ametsoc.org/AMS> under the local chapter information link. Any chapter member may fill out the application, but the chapter president or chair must sign the form prior to submission. The applications must be received at AMS Headquarters by 1 May. Late applications will not be considered. Because many chapters will be wrapping up their annual activities after this deadline, it will be acceptable to include in the application those significant chapter accomplishments that are expected in the last month prior to the election of new officers. This deadline was necessary to allow review committees adequate time to make their recommendations prior to regularly scheduled AMS committee meetings.

As both a former student chapter officer and local chapter officer I am very excited about the establishment of these awards. The LCAC and the Council believe that by giving these awards, the AMS will have a formal mechanism for acknowledging the vital role that local chapters have in carrying out the mission of the AMS. Additionally, over time these awards will provide positive reinforcement to many AMS members and weather enthusiasts who volunteer substantial time and energy to local chapters. As the LCAC chair I would like to strongly encourage chapters to take the small amount of time necessary to apply for these awards. It would truly be a shame if no applications were received during the first opportunity to present these awards to deserving local chapters at the 81st AMS Annual Meeting in Albuquerque. Remember, even if you do not win, sharing your chapter’s accomplishments via the application process may very well earn your chapter honor roll status, a bragging right of its own.—*Wendy Schreiber-Abshire.*

BAMS, Vol. 81, No. 1 (January 2000)

Each fall most local chapters begin a new year after a summer hiatus. New officers begin planning the year’s meetings, create strategies to increase membership, and maintain the current members’ involvement. Maintaining enthusiasm and planning monthly (for some chapters) meeting agendas are challenges. Now imagine adding special events like a conference or a weather explorer post to the annual preparation. Many chapters find it difficult enough to elect new officers each year and maintain an active membership. However, some local chapters and their officers have ventured into projects that require extensive planning.

Several local chapters organize recurring activities or one-time special events. The events

include conferences, mini workshops, job fairs, and annual picnics. In fact, the Omaha–Offut chapter sponsors the only known weather explorer post for young adults ages 14–20. The Houston chapter sponsored a job fair that required coordination with NASA, DOD, NWS, and other major organizations. Another example is the Golden Jubilee Symposium on Tornado Forecasting that the Oklahoma chapter organized to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first tornado forecast made at Tinker Air Force Base in 1948. These zealous chapters have proven that events or activities are possible, but not without a strong chapter commitment.

Often the actual planning process is rarely considered. Yet, no matter what activity a chapter considers, several dedicated individuals must pull the event together. Whether a chapter has experience producing a conference or is simply considering its first annual picnic, many questions need to be addressed prior to a chapter's commitment. Each event or activity will have different concerns, but general planning items will be addressed in this article.

As a chapter officer or member, the initial considerations are what the event's focus is and who will plan it. Will a committee be formed? Are only officers responsible to plan events that may increase a community's AMS awareness? No matter how these questions are answered, 5 to 10 individuals must commit to the planning and program success. Once the organizational team has been established and the focus decided, it is time for logistics. The first question is whether the focus is local, national, or global. Heavy precipitation effects on an area drainage system may be a local concern; the new research techniques utilized to study the problem may draw international interest. Even a job fair could expand from a local affair to global acclaim by asking for NASA's participation. Make certain to set constraints early in the planning process. The participant numbers will dictate where the event is held or how long it will last.

Will registration fees be charged and how much? Where will speakers and attendees be accommodated? Are there enough hotel rooms for a large function? Are only guest speakers invited to present or will paper and poster presentations be solicited? What attendee types are expected? An important aspect is the participant and sponsoring community demographics. A weather explorer post may focus its efforts on youth weather education, while a flood conference could have emergency managers as a target audience. The last major hurdle is financial. A smaller chapter may not have the initial funds to support an extra activity. Planners need to consider whether an event has fund-raising potential, as well as prepare for financial loss. The event will need promotion through flyers, a Bulletin announcement, and other media resources. Of particular concern is whether food will be provided during the event. Even single-day symposiums often provide break refreshments and boxed lunches. In addition, conferences often supply preprints, writing utensils, paper, cloth bags, and other attendance mementos. Although participants enjoy the free items, each additional "gift" will subtract from the chapter's fund-raising potential.

This article by no means addresses all the details or questions that may occur while planning a special event. Each chapter will face unique challenges and successes. Most chapters have found the experience beneficial to the chapter and community, which have

produced annual events.

Good luck with any chapter events, and should any questions or ideas arise, e-mail the Local Chapter Affairs Committee at amschaff@comet.ucar.edu.—*Sherri A. Del Soldato*.

BAMS, Vol. 80, No. 7 (July 1999)

The purpose of the local chapter affairs column, an ongoing feature of the Bulletin, is to provide a vehicle for news of issues and events relevant to local AMS chapters. This article recounts pertinent events that occurred during the 79th AMS Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

The week of 11–15 January 1999 was an active time for the AMS. Headquarters support of local AMS activities was never more evident than at this Annual Meeting. Once again local chapters were invited to display a poster in the entrance to the exhibit hall. Eleven chapters displayed posters about their chapter activities throughout the week in this highly visible location. AMS Headquarters also provided the opportunity for chapters to have a poster abstract printed in the Annual Meeting program. Unfortunately, only five of the 103 active chapters submitted an abstract. As chair of the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs I would like to strongly encourage wider participation in both of these activities at the 80th AMS Annual Meeting in Long Beach, California. Even if your chapter will not be able to send a representative to display a poster, please submit a simple one paragraph abstract for the program when you are invited to do so. If 50 chapters participate next year when invited to do so we will increase our participation tenfold. This is a tremendous opportunity to advertise your chapter and its activities to a large and diverse audience of meteorologists and weather enthusiasts.

On 11 January the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs met. We thanked Bernard Meisner for his leadership and dedication as committee chair for the past three years and welcomed two new members, Sherry Del Soldato and Jim Keeney. The 1999 AMS President, George Frederick, and AMS Executive Director Ron McPherson also attended the meeting. The primary focus of the meeting was to outline our activities for the coming year including the establishment of new AMS awards for both Chapter of the Year and Student Chapter of the Year. This process is well under way and we are hopeful that these awards will go forward.

Tuesday 12 January began with approximately 50 people representing 27 chapters gathering for a breakfast meeting. We discussed our goals, activities, and common challenges and reiterated the many avenues of support that AMS Headquarters provides to local chapters. A common theme that emerged from the discussion was the nearly universal difficulty of finding chapter officers and guest speakers. Yet all persons present expressed how they as active local chapter members found it a rewarding activity. I was personally impressed with the diversity of chapter activities beyond regular meetings including conferences, chapter scholarships, newsletters, regular forecasts for local media and school papers, contests, tours of all sorts, and many forms of community outreach. The attendees of this breakfast recommended that in addition to the Chapter of the Year awards that a chapter honor roll be established. This recommendation was included in the proposal put

forth to the AMS Executive Council in spring 1999.

Acting on a request made by local chapter representatives at the previous Annual Meeting, the AMS staff arranged to professionally record keynote lectures given during the 1999 Annual Meeting. The tapes of these presentations are now available for loan to local chapters. Two lectures are currently available, including the 42-minute Walter Orr Roberts Memorial Lecture by Richard C. J. Somerville of the University of California, San Diego, speaking on "Can Climate Models Be Trusted?" and, from the Annual Meeting luncheon, James Fleming's 30-minute presentation "Why the History of Science is Important to Science." The purpose for making these tapes available is to not only share these exciting presentations, but also to help mitigate the difficulty in planning topics for local chapter meetings. If your chapter is interested in either of these tapes, contact Kelly Garvey at 617-227-2426 ext. 215, or kgarvey@ametsoc.org.

The final major activity of the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs during this Annual Meeting on 14 January was to host the second annual luncheon for student volunteers. Thirty students gathered with the committee members and special guests Major Ken Carey, John Honora, Rose Auld-Miller, Kristine Kahanek, Mary Cairns, and representatives from AMS to discuss obtaining your first job in meteorology or a related science. Students listened and asked many questions as advice was dispensed. The importance of finding a career mentor was stressed by several of the speakers, and many of the students have already heeded their advice, staying in contact with some of the professional attendees. More than one student was overheard saying that the luncheon (where they were given direct access to professionals currently involved in a wide variety of scientific career paths) was the most valuable activity of the week for them. Needless to say, the third annual luncheon with a similar theme will be held in Long Beach next year. As always, if you have any questions, ideas, or issues pertaining to either local AMS chapter activities, AMS headquarter support for local chapters, or the establishment of the Chapter of the Year award and the chapter honor roll, please e-mail the members of the Local Chapter Affairs Committee at amschaff@comet.ucar.edu. We would be happy to hear from you and are committed to facilitating local chapter activities as well as supporting the 10-year goals of the AMS.—*Wendy Schreiber-Abshire*.

BAMS, Vol. 79, No. 6 (June 1998)

The purpose of the Local Chapter Affairs column, an ongoing feature of the Bulletin, is to provide news and commentary from Headquarters and the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs. It is prepared by the current chair of the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs. The first column appeared in the July 1996 issue (see Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc., 77, 1610-1611); the second appeared in the October 1996 issue (see Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc., 77, 2354-2355); the third in the March 1997 issue (see Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc., 78, 528-529); and the fourth in the October 1997 issue (see Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc., 78, 2268-2269).

The 78th Annual Meeting of the American Meteorological Society was an active time for the representatives of local AMS chapters who were in attendance. If you were in Phoenix maybe you noticed a blue "LC" (Local Chapter member) sticker on many attendees' name tags. Everyone who has indicated on their annual national dues form that they are a member of their local chapter

automatically receives one of these stickers on their badges at every national AMS conference. This year, eleven local chapters presented poster exhibits during the Annual Meeting, sharing information about their membership and their past year's activities. Abstracts of the posters appeared in the Annual Meeting program.

Bright and early Tuesday morning 12 January, approximately 40 persons representing 29 local AMS local chapters gathered for the annual chapter breakfast meeting sponsored by the AMS. Keith Seitter, Associate AMS Director, and Kelly Garvey, manager of special programs and local chapters' focal point also attended. The theme of this year's breakfast was "Novel Chapter Activities," which are those activities in which chapters engage beyond the typical lecture/seminar meeting or trip to the local television station. Bernard N. Meisner, chairman of the Local Chapter Affairs Committee, led the meeting. He began by sharing the activities of the Local Chapter Affairs committee, and then each person at the meeting introduced him/herself, and shared a special achievement or highlight related to their local chapter.

Novel guest speakers included a representative from a local power company (Central North Carolina); a representative from a state highway department who discussed snow removal (Puget Sound); a representative from the International Ice Patrol--which was established after the sinking of the Titanic (NYC/Long Island); and a representative from the National Science Teachers' Association (Denver/Boulder). Novel activities included the sponsorship of an Explorer Post (Omaha-Offut); staffing a weather booth at the science museum (Kansas City), the donation of weather instruments to local schools (Arkansas), a weather trivia contest (Wright Memorial); participation in highway trash pickup (Oklahoma); and the acknowledgment of local individuals and groups through a chapter award program (Metropolitan Atlanta). Several chapters organize and conduct local conferences and workshops (High Plains, Puget Sound and Wright Memorial). Novel meeting ideas included a tour of a baseball stadium--how do they get their weather information (Denver-Boulder), a visit to a science museum (Chicago) and a tour of a water management district facility (North Texas).

All chapters are encouraged to submit reports of their meetings and activities for publication in the AMS Bulletin and for inclusion in the Local Chapter Officers' Handbook. During the breakfast meeting the chapter representatives expressed their support for establishing a "Chapter of the Year" award. Summaries of chapter activities published in the Local Chapter News section of the Bulletin would be important criteria used for such an award.

Everyone was reminded repeatedly that for the answer to any question or concern regarding local AMS chapters they should, "Call Kelly (Garvey)" at AMS headquarters.

The following day, members of the Local Chapter Affairs Committee took time out from attending conference sessions for a committee meeting. First, the committee discussed ideas for local chapter affairs articles to appear in the Bulletin during the coming year. A majority of the meeting was spent constructing input for a draft proposal to present to the Executive Council regarding the establishment of a yearly award recognizing the local chapter and local student chapter of the year. Stay tuned for more details!

Another exciting activity organized by the Local Chapter Affairs Committee, with complete support from the AMS, was a luncheon for the student chapter officers who were working as volunteers at the meeting. Each annual meeting is greatly facilitated by the hard work that these students do during the week. The theme of the luncheon was "Getting Your First Job in Meteorology." Professionals representing a broad spectrum of employment opportunities in meteorology

sat at tables with students and engaged in informal discussions. Col. Tom Adang (AFWA), Gary Carter and Theresa Rossi (NWS), Erwin Prater (Trinity Consultants) and Valerie Voss (CNN) joined Local Chapter Affairs Committee members Wendy Schreiber-Abshire (COMET), Wayne McCollom (retired), Carmen Tarbell (NWS) and Richard Peterson (Texas Tech Univ.) in discussing strategies and techniques for a successful job search.

Dr. Meisner shared his experiences from his long and varied career in academia, research, the private sector, the USDA Forest Service and the NWS. Other professionals at the luncheon added their two cents worth as well, while students eagerly collected tips and made notes. Several students commented on how much they enjoyed the mentoring time, and many suggested that this activity be established as an annual event. After the question-and-answer portion of the meeting, many students lingered and visited one-on-one with the meteorologists in attendance concluding with a frenzied business card exchange.

The link between the national AMS and local chapters is stronger and more evident than ever. Exciting new endeavors are in the works for the coming year. During 1997, seven new chapters were established, and six more were reactivated! Most local chapters have established Web pages as well; and they can be reached from the national AMS home page at <http://www.ametsoc.org>. If you are not involved in a local chapter, maybe it's time to look into what you are missing!—*Wendy Schreiber-Abshire and Bernard N. Meisner.*

BAMS, Vol. 78, No. 10 (October 1997)

Chapter leaders, how well do you know your chapter? When I was elected chairman of the Riverside-San Bernardino chapter several years ago, as a relative newcomer to the area I decided to conduct a survey of its members, and we got some interesting results. Part of my motivation for conducting the survey was based on a leadership seminar I had recently attended at my alma mater. Like most chapter leaders, I am active in a number of organizations.

We had many retired members in the chapter and spouses usually attended our monthly chapter dinner meetings. With so many members on fixed incomes the chapter traditionally looked for restaurants with a meeting room and total dinner costs around \$10.00. Needless to say, there were not many in the area that met those criteria.

By sending a questionnaire to all the chapter members, we learned that the majority of the members were willing to spend more for dinner and travel farther than had been assumed to attend a meeting. That gave us a greater selection of meeting locations. The members also provided some interesting ideas for speakers and topics for future meetings.

Here are some survey tips I learned at that leadership workshop.

- Avoid white paper for surveys. It reduces the response rate. Although 70% of people prefer to read black text on white paper, bright colors like red, orange, and hot pink increase survey response rates.
- "Yes/No" questions elicit the highest response rate.
- Multiple choice questions capture the most information and are the next most popular with readers. Give four or six choices. An odd number of choices introduces a bias because the natural tendency is to pick the middle response.
- Ranking items by number is the third most effective form of question.

- Open-ended questions (where the respondents are free to write out their responses) are valuable, but the answers cannot be tabulated easily. They also elicit the lowest response rate. As a rule of thumb, do not have more than one open-ended question for every 10 yes/no or multiple choice questions.
- It is ideal to provide a return postage. You will, at the very least, delay the response if you depend on the reader to provide a stamp.
- Surveys should be taken every two to five years.
- The best times of year to send out any direct mail is September, October, February, or March; the worst times are November, December, early January, and June, July, and August.
- While you may use Web page forms for your surveys, do not assume all potential respondents have Internet access and/or are comfortable with providing information over an insecure Internet line.
- Test your survey before distributing it. Showing your survey to a few people will help identify any confusing directions or misleading questions.
- To help eliminate any bias, explicitly tell your respondents not to sign their names to the survey form.
- It is most effective to include your survey as part of an annual dues statement or a monthly newsletter. However, keep the survey as a freestanding pullout page. Respondents are reluctant to clip or tear a newsletter.
- Prominently indicate the deadline for responding. Allow sufficient time for people to receive their surveys and consider their responses, but do not let them wait more than a week. Otherwise, the survey may get buried in a "do later" pile. (I have several of those on my desk.)
- Be concise. Limit the survey to one or two pages at the most.
- Summarize the results of the survey and publish it so everyone can see their response did make a difference.

Remember that AMS Headquarters will support one mailing per chapter per year to all AMS members in the local chapter's area. The local chapter should provide camera-ready copy of the mailing to AMS Headquarters with ample time to allow for duplication and mailing. Chapter officers should contact Kelly Garvey (AMS, 45 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; telephone: 617-227-2426, ext. 215; e-mail: kgarvey@ametsoc.org), the local chapter point of contact at AMS Headquarters, to plan the mailing.

I invite chapter leaders to share copies of surveys they develop with the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs. In turn, the committee would be glad to provide copies of those surveys to other chapters who are planning a survey.—*Bernard N. Meisner*.

BAMS, Volume 78, No. 3 (March 1997)

How do you build an organization to which people want to belong? This is the fundamental question local chapter officers face on a monthly basis as they plan meetings and activities. In that spirit, this installment of the Local Chapter Affairs article series presents some ideas to both encourage membership and make meetings fun.

Getting people in the door is the first trick. It is important to not only plan a variety of speakers and activities, but to also provide plenty of advance notice of your meeting dates.

Potential speakers and activities. Potential speakers can be drawn from the local community, scientists visiting the area, and the chapter membership. Many industries and utility companies have speaker's bureaus and/or frequently give tours of their facilities. Every community likely has an emergency manager who could explain preparations and planning for weather-related disasters. Every chapter probably has at least one "computer whiz" who could demonstrate the different weather information that can be found on the Internet.

The Los Angeles chapter holds an annual pot luck dinner with members bringing videos and photos to share, while the University of Nebraska chapter has an annual picnic. Check when your local IMAX theater is next showing the movie *Storm Chasers*. Some chapters invite the winners of the local science fairs to give their presentations to the chapter.

The Palmetto chapter hosts an annual mini-technical conference over a weekend, inviting members from neighboring chapters to participate. Be advised that such a conference requires a lot of planning to be successful.

Scheduling a meeting. There are two common approaches for planning monthly meetings—one needs to decide which works better for the chapter. Some chapters choose to have their meetings on the same day of a given week each month, for example, the third Thursday of each month. This method is very useful for planning purposes and less advance notice is required because members know when to expect a meeting. The downside of this approach is that it limits flexibility in accommodating guest speakers' schedules and may prevent some members—who always have a conflict on that day—from attending.

The other approach is to vary the day and even the week to accommodate speakers and tour schedules. Although this approach allows for a great deal of flexibility and may keep meetings open to a broader range of attendees, it does not allow for regular planning and demands at least two to three weeks of advance notice to members so they can set that time aside.

Aside from all the effort that is required to secure guest speakers, plan field trips, and set meeting times that will interest and accommodate a majority of your membership, there are other things of which one may not have thought that can help create an exciting atmosphere for the local chapter.

Some additional ideas. Consider holding a raffle at a meeting where those in attendance buy tickets for a chance to win a weather-related item, such as a calendar, poster, book, instrument, or clothing item. Use the proceeds to help finance a chapter activity or to pay for special snacks at the next meeting. In a similar vein, one can devise a method to award a door prize to one of the attendees, perhaps the one sitting in the lucky chair. The District of Columbia chapter, for example, awards a weather radio each month, with the provision that the winner must donate it to a local school or other organization.

Another idea is to hold chapter contests with some fun weather-related paraphernalia as the prize. Contests could involve weather photography, date of first snowfall, first day over 100 degrees, first freeze, or something else that is appropriate for the area. Some chapters recognize a "Member of the Year" with a plaque or similar award, often at an annual banquet.

If chapter members are not paying their dues, one consideration to influence them to do so is creating a special name tag system for the paid members. The peer pressure to be wearing a nice name tag like the others in the room is amazingly convincing. This idea has the dual benefit of improving chapter communications by providing both old and new members an easy way to establish a

first name basis and creates a mechanism for officers and members to recognize visitors who may be potential new members.

Many local chapters now have pages on the World Wide Web. This is an excellent medium for publicizing the local chapter and attracting new members. There will soon be links to all local chapters' pages from the AMS Local Chapter Web page. Remember to add a link to the AMS home page to your chapter page.

Whatever you do, do not forget to aim high. The sky is the limit in terms of who you invite to speak and where you decide to go, as well as the education and science efforts you choose to be involved in. If the officers and/or other members involved in various chapter activities are excited, others will be too. Getting individual members involved in specific efforts creates a feeling of chapter ownership and will contribute to a strong local chapter. Remember the famous words from the movie *Field of Dreams*, "If you build it, they will come." And remember to share your successes by submitting a synopsis of each meeting for publication in the Chapter News section of the *Bulletin*.—Wendy Schreiber-Abshire and Bernard Meisner.

BAMS, Volume 77, No. 10 (October 1996)

Many of the services provided to local chapters by AMS Headquarters and the Committee on Local Chapters are listed and outlined in the following text.

Committee directive. The goals of the Committee on Local Chapters are 1) to continue to enhance interaction between AMS Headquarters and local chapters, 2) to improve and facilitate interactions among chapters, and 3) to increase the number of active local chapters and to increase the membership in local chapters.

Postage costs. The Committee on Local Chapters noted at its first meeting that postage costs are often the largest item of a chapter's operating budget. At the recommendation of the committee, AMS Headquarters will support one mailing per chapter per year to all AMS members in the local chapter's area. This mailing might consist of a survey to determine the best time(s) and place(s) to hold a local chapter meeting, an announcement of a special chapter meeting (awards banquet, special guest speaker, minitechnical conference, etc.), ballots for an election of local chapter officers, or just an invitation to participate in the next chapter meeting. The local chapter should provide a camera-ready copy of the mailing to AMS Headquarters with ample time to allow for duplication and mailing. Chapter officers should contact Kelly Garvey, the local chapter point of contact at AMS Headquarters, to plan the mailing.

Chapter letterhead. In addition, AMS Headquarters provides official chapter stationary at no cost to all local chapters. As always, contact Kelly Garvey at AMS Headquarters to arrange for printing and delivery of the chapter's stationary.

Chapter directory. A directory of all local chapters is published in every August issue of the AMS *Bulletin*. The directory includes telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for chapter officers. Please feel free to use this directory to contact the officers of your local chapter for information concerning upcoming meetings and other chapter events. Chapter officers should contact their colleagues in neighboring chapters to plan a joint meeting or coordinating the judging of science fairs in their area.

Local chapter home pages. Recognizing the potential of the Internet's World Wide Web for publi-

cizing and promoting local chapter activities, the committee has discussed the potential for providing links to local chapters' pages from the AMS home page (URL: <http://www.ametsoc.org/AMS>). A questionnaire was sent to all local chapter presidents last spring to determine interest in chapter Web documents. Several local chapters already have Web pages. AMS Headquarters is in the process of creating a basic Web page for local chapter on the AMS Web server or another server to which the local chapter has access. All local chapter Web documents, in turn, should have a link back to the AMS home page.

Chapter news. In every issue of the *Bulletin*, chapters share their activities and other interesting events with other AMS members through the "Chapter News" section. Chapter news should be submitted to Julie Burba, the news editor, at AMS Headquarters.

AMS meetings. Local chapters are also recognized at many national meetings of the Society. A map showing the location of all local chapters is prominently displayed at these meetings. Local chapters are also invited to display a poster featuring chapter activities at the annual meeting of the Society. Local chapter members are also called upon to volunteer their time by helping out at AMS sponsored meetings and conferences, especially the Annual Meeting.

Chapter recognition. A question concerning local chapter affiliation has been added to the annual dues statement sent to every member. This information is being added to the Society's member database. All local chapter members will be recognized with a sticker on their name badges at the upcoming 77th Annual Meeting.

Summer opportunities. As a special service to our student members, each spring the Society solicits information concerning summer employment opportunities from employers. These job announcements are sent to every student member of the Society and are also electronically published on the Society's Web pages.

The handbook. Perhaps the best service provided to the local chapters is the *Chapter Officers' Handbook*, first introduced last year. The handbook summarizes essential information concerning the Society and local chapters; including a listing of all local chapters and officers; the names, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses of important contacts at AMS Headquarters; and a section on program ideas for local chapters. Chapter officers are encouraged to share their program ideas for future issues of the handbook.—*Bernard N. Meisner*.

BAMS, Volume 77, No. 7 (July 1996)

In January 1993, the AMS Council, in response to a recommendation from the AMS Planning Commission, created an ad hoc Committee on Local Chapters to review the Society's relationship with its local chapters and take action where possible to improve that *relationship* (*Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **74**, 669). The committee was tasked to report back to the Council by January 1996 on its progress and with recommendations for additional steps that might be taken to strengthen the relationship between the Society and its local chapters.

The ad hoc Committee met during the Society's 74th, 75th, and 76th Annual Meetings. In addition, there was regular correspondence among members of the committee via mail, e-mail, and fax. Substantive technical, legal, and administrative support was provided by the AMS Headquarters staff, especially by Keith Seitter, Kelly S. Garvey, and Julie A. Burba, without whose assistance the ad hoc Committee could not have functioned.

In addition to aforementioned work sessions, the ad hoc Committee met with groups of local chap-

ter officers in breakfast meetings at the 74th, 75th, and 76th Annual Meetings. These sessions were very well attended by representatives from local and student chapters. At each meeting there were productive discussions among committee members, AMS staff, and the chapter representatives. These discussions addressed what the Society might do to foster activities within and among local chapters and what the local chapters might do to support the Society. Written input in the form of a survey of local chapter officers was also taken during the 74th Annual Meeting. Each year the current president of the Society and the president-elect have regularly participated in the committee's meetings and the local chapters' breakfast.

From discussions with, and input received from Society members active in local chapters, it is clear that many of these grass roots organizations play important professional and social roles in the lives of these members. This appears to be especially the case with those members not directly associated with a university. As private sector meteorology becomes more important in the coming years, local chapters can be expected to play an even greater role in this regard than they have in the past.

Student chapters also play an important role in shaping the professional attitudes of those aspiring to become meteorologists, providing them venues in which to learn leadership skills and to meet informally with practitioners in the discipline.

Local chapters also provide important support to the Society. For example, over the past three years selected local chapters were asked to participate in the Minority Scholarship program by disseminating announcements, soliciting applications, and assisting in the review process. In several cases, comments from the local chapters were very helpful in identifying the successful candidates. This support has shown that there are many individuals in the local chapters who, if called upon in an appropriate and timely manner, can assist the Society in its educational and outreach efforts, and perhaps in other areas.

In fall 1993, in response to a related recommendation of the Planning Commission, Kelly S. Garvey, member/subscription services manager, was designated as the local chapter point of contact at AMS Headquarters. As a result, the Society has the most effective contact with its local chapters that it has had in years. She can be reached at Member/Subscription Services Manager, American Meteorological Society, 45 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108-3693; telephone: 617-227-2426, ext. 215; fax: 617-742-8718; e-mail: kgarvey@ametsoc.org

The primary action taken by the ad hoc Committee has been to develop a Local Chapter Officers' Handbook. The handbook contains a wide range of material, pulling together into one document numerous procedures and policies that have evolved over the years about what local chapters can and cannot do relative to the Society, as well as providing much useful information on operating an effective local chapter.

Actual writing of the handbook was carried out by the staff at AMS Headquarters. Drafts were reviewed by the ad hoc Committee, the Headquarters staff, local chapter officers, and the Society's legal counsel. With the hard work of the Headquarters' staff, the preparation of this document moved forward in a timely manner. A copy of the final draft was provided to the AMS Executive Committee in a July 1995 report. Following the favorable recommendation of the Executive Committee, the draft handbook was approved by the AMS Council at its September 1995 meeting. The handbook was published in the fall of 1995; an announcement indicating its availability appeared in the November 1995 issue of the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*.

In formulating its recommendations to the AMS Council, the goal of the ad hoc Committee was to identify actions that the Society can take that will become a routine part of the way it does business, and in doing so, enhance the visibility and stature of the local chapters within the Society.

The ad hoc Committee recommended the addition of local chapter membership affiliation to the Society's membership database. This information solicited in the questionnaire was included with the most recent annual dues statement. At the recommendation of the committee, a prominent location has been established for local chapter displays at each Society-sponsored meeting. The committee also recommended that the breakfast with local chapter representatives become a regular part of the Society's annual meeting. To facilitate interaction among local chapters, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses have been added to the annual chapter directory, which is published in the August issue of the *Bulletin*.

Noting the need to maintain the momentum that had been developed by the ad hoc Committee, and to provide advice and counsel to the AMS Headquarters staff on issues affecting local chapters, the ad hoc Committee recommended that the Society establish an AMS Committee on Local Chapter Affairs. The ad hoc Committee also recommended that a column entitled "Local Chapter Affairs" become a regular feature in the *Bulletin*, and that the Chair of the Committee on Local Chapter Affairs should be designated as the editor of this column. The column, of which this is the first, will feature news and commentary from Headquarters of interest to local chapters and tips and insights on effective chapter operations.

Further refinement and actual implementation of most of the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee will be the responsibility of the new Committee on Local Chapter Affairs, which, at the recommendation of the ad hoc Committee, was appointed by the AMS Executive Committee at their January 1996 meeting. The members of the committee are Bernard N. Meisner (North Texas chapter), chair; Wendy Schreiber-Abshire (Denver-Boulder chapter); Wayne McCollom (St. Louis chapter); Lucille Marks (Northern California chapter); Richard Peterson (the West Texas student chapter faculty advisor); and Carmen Tarbell (District of Columbia chapter).

The Committee on Local Chapter Affairs held its organizational meeting during the 76th Annual Meeting in Atlanta. Recommendations and suggestions made during that meeting will be reported in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.—*Bernard N. Meisner, chair, Committee on Local Chapter Affairs.*