**AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CYBERNETICS**

**NEWS LETTER JULY 11, 1980**

Edited by: Allenna Leonard

**EDITORIAL: ROLE OF THE SOCIETY**

B. Clemson

The proper role of the ASC is a question that we have yet to resolve. One of our informal meetings stimulated me to articulate two guidelines (possibly embraced by no one other than myself!). The guidelines are:

- Identify favorable evolutionary trends and try to facilitate them.
- Avoid competing with others by not doing anything that is already being done well.

I am aware that these are fraught with ambiguities and perplexities, but one has to leap in somewhere in order to talk about purpose. I shall be well pleased if my guidelines irritate you enough to cause you to articulate your own (and we can publish them in the newsletter).

**PUBLICATIONS: NEW DIRECTIONS?**

Bob Narendra's indication that he does not wish to continue as editor of the Journal of Cybernetics and Information Science after the end of 1980 presents ASC with some fairly short range decisions about what form its publications will take. The alternatives include:

1. Find a new editor for the Journal. If you would be interested please contact Stuart ASAP for information.
2. Discontinue the Journal and refund prepaid subscriptions.
3. Merge the Journal into the Forum which has recently been seeing more contributions from ASC members than has the Journal.

Considerations include what kind of investments of time and energy we wish to make in the ASC publications, how we see the publications contributing to the goals and plans we made at the April Planning Conference and how we can fulfill obligations incurred to subscribers and contributors. Since our time line on this is short, please communicate your thoughts on this to Stuart or one of the other officers as soon as you can.

**A WORD OF THANKS ON THE ASC QUESTIONNAIRE**

Special thanks are due to Frank Leonard for taking the questions suggested by the committee, adding some of his own and arranging them into a polished whole. Thanks also to all the people who suggested questions, reviewed materials

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**FIRST ANNUAL MAINE CYBERNETICS FESTIVAL**

**JULY 18-20, 1980**

Plans are moving ahead to get together at Roger Conant's farm on the coast of Maine. Due to a schedule conflict, Heinz von Foerster will not be able to do the colloquium at the University of Maine. Other plans remain the same. Please let Polly Clark know as soon as possible if you plan to be there.

Follow your road map to Highway 15 which runs southward through Bangor. Follow 15 to the coast, across a bridge and a causeway to the town of Deer Isle. Leave 15 and go to Sunset. Go one mile beyond the top of a hill. Turn left there and go 1/4 mile to our driveway which is on the right. You will see a barn and then the farmhouse. Roger's phone # is 207-348-2504. For crow's-flight travelers, Deer Isle is in the same general vicinity as Acadia National Park.

So far, Stuart Umpleby, Barry and Shelly Clemson, Bill Reckmeyer, Larry Heilprin, Ellen Stolerick, Greg and Laura, Frank and Allenna Leonard, Polly Clark and Roger Conant will be there. Meal charges will be $9.00 per person with invitations extended to anyone with a background in cybernetics and their families. Here's hoping we get a good response from the announcement so we can continue and build on the fellowship begun in April.

**ASC AND ASIS: A POTENTIAL LIAISON**

Stuart Umpleby and Larry Heilprin have met with Sam Beatty, executive director of the American Society for Information Science to discuss the possibility of ASC opening an office in Washington in the ASIS headquarters office. ASC would then have a staff person half time (shared with ASIS) an 'office', a telephone number and access to postage, computer, mailing services, etc. The cost to ASC would come to about $12-15,000 per year and would commit us to raising this money through memberships, from individuals and corporations, grants or other means. The proposal will be presented for consideration at the ASIS Board meeting July 14 and 15. Larry Heilprin a former president of ASIS and an active member of ASC will support the proposal. Your ideas on this question are needed before that meeting.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR POSITION STILL OPEN**

I have agreed to carry through with the ASC News Letter until fall but expect my schedule to be too heavy after that. The call is still out for an enthusiastic ASC editor.
**RECRUITMENT** by B. Clemson

Phyllis Carr (30 Walker Avenue, Gaithersburg, Md 20875) has agreed to be our recruitment chairman. Recruitment has been discussed at each of our informal meetings and a strategy is beginning to emerge. The elements of this strategy so far are:

- begin preparing now for a massive effort in September because that is the time that gets the best returns.
- prepare a carefully worked out 2-4 page letter to go with our new brochure.
- prepare special letters to go to defineable special populations. Examples of such special populations include: Umpleby's former students, Clemson's former students, business executives, etc. We need suggestions here!
- when we have lists of names that are too big to handle (e.g. one of our members has a file of 9000 names), concentrate on those geographic regions where we already have something of a cluster of members (e.g. Philadelphia, Louisville, or San Jose).
- Code the forms so that we can determine which mailings are more or less effective and thereby learn how to recruit better.

A number of people are helping Phyllis (e.g. Leila Engmann, Connie Gordon, Alenna Leonard) but the demands here are massive. Please contact Phyllis if you can help. You might also consider special tactics for your own geographic or disciplinary niche. I, for instance, am currently thinking very hard about how to find or develop some cybernetic colleagues near my new home in Maine. One thing all of us can do is to send Phyllis names of acquaintances who might be interested.

**UPCOMING CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

World Future Society and Canadian Futures Society July 20-24 at the Harbour Castle Convention Center in Toronto. ASC member Bill Moore will be participating in a session "The Future of Habitat and You" on the 24th.

Naropa in Boulder Colorado will host a series of informal seminars. These typically attract such thinkers as Humberto Maturana, Francisco Varela, Ernst von Glassersfeld, Heinz von Foerster, Fernando Flores, and Joseph Goguen. For information contact: Naropa at 1111 Pearl St., Boulder, Colorado 80302. An unconfirmed telephone number for Naropa is 303-444-0202.

**TRAVEL SUPPORT FOR ACAPULCO CONFERENCE**

ASC has applied for a group travel grant for thirty people from the National Science Foundation for the Acapulco Conference. The travel grants cover only the cost of air travel. Conference registration is $85 if paid prior to 8/15 and $95 later for those giving papers. Rooms range from $8.00 to $43 per night for a single. Both plane and hotel reservations should be made early to take advantage of reduced rates and be sure of space.

The travel grants will be awarded on the basis of the quality of the paper proposed in a one page abstract, and must be accepted by the Conference Chairman and his review process as well. The selection committee will try to achieve a balance between junior and senior scientists, diverse fields and institutional settings and geography. Awards will be made without regard to race, color, sex or national origin.

The deadline for applications will be October 1, 1980. This will be before we receive word from NSF. Applications should include the abstract, a resume, your estimated air fare (economy class) and the likelihood of your receiving support from your home institution, along with other relevant information. They should be addressed to ASC, 2131 G Street, N.W. Washington D.C. 20052 202-676-7530.

**CONFERENCE SCHEDULE (Continued)**

International Cybernetics Association September 8-13 at Namur, Belgium. Stuart will be there to represent ASC and has details.

International Congress on Applied Systems Research and Cybernetics December 12-15 in Acapulco, Mexico. For information contact: Dr. George E. Lasker, School of Computer Science, University of Windsor, Windsor Ontario, Canada N9B-3P4.

Joint Conference of AAAS, SGSR, and ASC January 6-9, 1981 in Toronto. Both Stafford Beer and Heinz von Foerster may be able to attend this year. Barry Clemson is exploring an event in Maine which could pick up travel costs.


Sixth International Conference on System Dynamics November 6 - 8, 1980 in Paris France