ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MESSAGE

I have invited the program managers to act as guest columnists for me from time to time. This month I have invited Jerry Ullman to act as guest columnist. He has written an article about “Coordinating Amongst Ourselves”.

Tom Urbanik

COORDINATING AMONGST OURSELVES

TTI is enjoying its largest year ever in terms of the amount of research it has under contract. We continued to grow over the past several years despite threats of funding cuts, increased competition for state and federal research dollars, and other concerns. Our success makes us the envy of many of the other academic institutions and consultants who do transportation research and technology transfer. At the same time, this prosperity creates new challenges for us in coordinating amongst ourselves as we go about our work.

It is hard for most outside of TTI to fathom just how large we have become, how many individuals we have involved in our research programs and the number of activities we have going on at any one time. Sponsors, the media, and the general public typically “see” TTI as a single entity, and often assume we all know everything that is going on under the Institute’s purview and are coordinating all of our efforts. While we know this “perfect” scenario is almost impossible to achieve, we can make great strides towards better coordination by following a few simple suggestions.

1. **Seek for information within first** — particularly when the information pertains to or is held by our sponsors or other agencies. Most operating agencies are being forced to do more with less personnel, and may resent having to answer the same questions over and over again. Make a few calls or send an e-mail note to a few people in the organization to see if someone has already obtained what you’re looking for as part of another project, as part of their regular contacts with the sponsor, will be obtaining that information in the near future, etc.

2. **Keep satellite offices informed** — whenever conducting surveys or field studies in their area. A quick call or e-mail about work you will be doing in their area can help prevent them from being “blind sided” by questions from local citizens, media, or operating agencies wanting to know more about what is going on and why. Furthermore, they may have additional insight into the issue at hand and can offer you a better approach to the task.

3. **Get the word out** — about what you have going on to others in the organization. This newsletter and the Intranet web page ways to keep everyone informed. Also, it can be a good idea to contact those individuals here at TTI who are serving on state and national committees which are relevant to what you are doing, and brief them periodically about your work from time to time. They can then carry your message forward and respond appropriately (or at least provide your name as the contact) if they are questioned about it or a related topic as part of their committee involvement.

You can probably come up with more (and better) ideas on how to promote improved coordination within the organization as well. Whatever the method(s) used, I believe an ongoing commitment towards internal coordination can yield significant benefits to us individually and the Institute as a whole.

Jerry Ullman

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**CALENDAR MARKS**

- May 2-7: Finals
- May 9-10: Graduation
- May 11: Mothers Day
- May 16: Transportation Systems Division Meeting
- Jun 2: Summer Semester Begins
- Jun 2-6: RMC Spring Meeting, Arlington
- Jun 2-5: ITS America, 7th Annual Meeting, Washington
- Jun 15: Fathers Day
- June: ROC finalizes project selection
- Jul 4: Independence Day (Holiday)
- Aug 3-6: ITE Annual Meeting, Boston
- Oct 13-15: TxDOT Transportation Conference, Rudder
- Nov 14-18: AASHTO Annual Meeting, Salt Lake
- Nov 27-28: Thanksgiving Holiday
- Jan 11-15: TRB Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

Some refer to life as a game. However, it is important to remember that life is not like a spelling bee, where you can correctly spell difficult words, and then make only one mistake and lose. Life is more like baseball, where the best team in the world loses one-third of its games, the best batters only hit the ball one-third of the time, and even the worst teams have their shining moments.
DIVISION RETREAT HERE'S THE SCOOP

On Friday, May 16, 1997 the Transportation Systems Division Retreat will take place at Hill Top Lakes Resort. The theme of this year's retreat is communication. The objectives of the retreat are:

1) Encourage interaction among people who don't usually get to interact on a regular basis,
2) Introduce new division personnel to the division and find out about their professional and social interests, and
3) Provide information on new division initiatives and to receive feedback from the employees.

The format for this year's retreat is similar to previous retreats, however there will be some minor changes. The overview of the division's programs will still occur, although this portion of the agenda will be shorter in duration and will emphasize changes that have occurred over the past year. The administration will be represented by Dennis Christiansen, who will speak about various TTI policies. The Division Strategic Plan will be presented by Dan Fambro and participants will have an opportunity to provide input to this initiative as well. In addition, a number of speakers related to TTI communications will provide presentations. We will tie the whole day together with a series of challenging team building events.

Registration (with coffee and donuts) begins at 8:30 with the official events beginning at 9:00. There will be a catered lunch. The official day ends at 4:00 p.m. although there will be an optional happy hour and catered dinner. The cost is yet to be determined but will be approximately $7.00 for full-time and professional staff and $4.00 for part-timers (graduate and undergraduate students). More information will be made available closer to the event. The organizing committee is looking forward to seeing you there!

Larry Rilett

GOODBYES!

The DSI Program bids farewell and sends best wishes and good luck to: Bowman Kelly, Melissa Peoples, and Ricardo Morales. Congratulations to Bowman, a Master of Science candidate, who will graduate in August. He will be here at TTI through May putting the finishing touches on his thesis. Congratulations are also in order for Melisa and Ricardo, both of whom will 'walk the stage' on May 10 and receive their degree in Civil Engineering.

After a summer of genealogy research, Melissa will return to Aggieland in September to start Graduate School in Transportation Engineering.

Rick, on the other hand, has opted for the 'real world' and is interviewing with a number of construction/consulting companies around the country.

Meanwhile, Cassie Albrecht, also a student in the DSI Program, has been accepted into the Undergraduate Fellows Program for the Summer of 1997. She'll be doing research in the Economics/Planning group and will hopefully return to the DSI group in September.

Ashish Sabnekar of the Transport Operations Program is graduating May 9. Ashish is still looking for a job and will be staying in the Bryan/College Station area for the immediate future. Congratulations and best wishes!

Firoze Shams of the Traffic Management and Information Systems Program is also graduating. Firoze is joining Ibarra Consulting, an engineering firm in Dallas. He will begin work with them later this month. Congratulations and best wishes!

Chris Orosco from the Traffic Analysis Program is graduating with a B.S. in Civil Engineering (Transportation option). Chris will be working in Houston for Turner Collie & Braden Inc.

Michael Meadors of the Transport Operations Program is relocating to Austin to join Allison. At last word, he was considering several employment opportunities. Best wishes and good luck.

Marissa Chavez, of the Transportation Systems Division, is leaving to work for TxDOT this the summer. Best wishes for a great and productive summer.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

It's a Girl!

Mark and Ann Shafer are the proud parents a baby girl. Reagan Elizabeth Shafer was born Tuesday, April 8. Reagan's proud big brothers are 4 year old Quinn Shafer and 2 year old Preston Shafer.

It's a Boy!

James and Suzanne Ochoa are the proud parents of a baby boy. Matthew James was born Saturday, April 12.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Let it never be said of you, "I thought that he would never finish.” Follow the advice I was given when singing in supper clubs: "Get off while you're ahead; always leave them wanting more.” Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening. A talk, as Mrs. Hubert Humphrey reminded her husband, need not be eternal to be immortal.

Dorothy Sarnoff
MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Kay Fitzpatrick recently attended the ITE Conference on Transportation and Sustainable Communities in Tampa, Florida, and presented a paper on Bus Stop Location and Design.

Dan Middleton and Debbie Jasek scheduled and met with the Advisory Committee on the IH-10 Intermodal Freight study on April 16 in Houston. The committee is scheduled to meet three times during the course of the 18 month study and consists of TxDOT, LaDOTD, ports, rail, motor carriers, cities, and MPOs.

The Traffic Analysis Program is developing an intersection simulation program for use in educational programs. The program is being designed to generate interest in transportation engineering. Currently, the program is being developed for a 12-yr old audience. Kay Fitzpatrick and Micah Hersberg beta tested the software during the Expanding Your Horizon conference that was held on March 22.

Kevin Balke, Nadeem Chadhaury, Edmond Chang, Dan Fambro, Gene Hawkins, Russell Henk, Dan Middleton, Ogle, Chris Poe, and Jerry Ullman recently attended a Lessons in Leadership seminar "Synergy: Creating Unstoppable People, Teams, and Organizations" by Dr. Stephen Covey; San Antonio-April 14. Results are pending!!!

Dan Middleton, Chris Poe, and Russell Henk met with Southwest Research Institute to discuss submitting a proposal to the Federal Highway Administration on an infrared sensor as part of the Priority Technologies Program.

TRANSPORTATION TRIVIA

Last month's trivia was name that state and here are the answers:

New York was named the Empire State by George Washington.
Oregon is the Beaver State.
Tennessee is the Volunteer State.
Washington is the Evergreen State.
Pennsylvania is the Keystone State.

Here are this month's questions:

Why was 1 Cherry Street, New York City, important to American History?
This man directed the mass migration of Mormons to the Great Salt Lake Valley and was the first governor of Utah. Who was he?
The Homestake Gold Mine, the largest producing gold mine in the U. S. is located in what state?
Name the only state pronounced as one syllable.
What color is Kentucky bluegrass?

Good luck. Look for the answers next month.
Look for the answers in next month's interchange.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

May 1     Monye Brookover
May 6     Michael Thomadakis
May 8     Wesley McClure
May 10    Bob Brydia
May 15    Dwayne Morris
May 15    Kelly Blume
May 15    Jim Carvell
May 16    Steve Venglar
May 16    Jack Webb
May 18    Terry Ogle
May 19    Joseph Koorthrapally
May 31    Julia Wilkie
Jun 1     Rene Hulett
Jun 6     Libby Childress
Jun 12    Rick Morales
Jun 17    Ken Fogle
Jun 17    Anna Vizcarra
Jun 18    Lewis Nowlin
Jun 22    Edmond Chang
Jun 25    Vijay Bogarapu
Jun 25    Roelof Engelbrecht
Jun 27    James Ochoa

OBSTACLES

Obstacles always seem to pop up at the most trying times. Don’t let the obstacles get in the way of getting things done and get you down. One great source of inspiration is a book called Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit, by Canfield and Hansen. Consider the following excerpts:

After Fred Astaire’s first screen test a 1933 memo from the MGM testing director said: “Can’t act. Slightly Bald Can dance a little.” Astaire kept that memo above his fireplace.

An expert said of famous football coach Vince Lombardi: “He possesses minimal football knowledge. Lacks motivation.”

Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper for lacking ideas. He also went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland.

Eighteen publishers turned down Richard Bach’s 10,000 word story about a soaring seagull before Macmillan finally published it in 1970. By 1975, Jonathan Livingston Seagull had sold more than seven million copies in the U. S. alone.

Remember the DIVISION RETREAT
May 16!

Hilltop Lakes
EASTER EGGS

Easter eggs aren't always brightly colored. They can instead be undocumented bits of code that come hidden inside operating systems, applications, Web browsers, games, and other programs. Click in the proper place, edit the right file, or type in the secret sequence, and you'll be rewarded with all sorts of things. They're fun to look for, fun to find, and of absolutely no practical use whatsoever. Interested in Easter Egg Hunting? Yes, you too can do it! You do not even have to be a kid! And it does not even have to be Easter!

Try this:

Load up Netscape,
Type *about:mozilla* in the location box
press Enter.

And Presto! There is a subtle message from Netscape to its arch rival.

Also try this:

Go to Netscape
Press Ctrl+Alt+F

You will be instantly transported to something fishy.

Most professional applications and operating systems contain such "undocumented" features called Easter Eggs. (Now, this is different from the usually unexpected features in all software called "bugs").

Find Me!

Easter Eggs are usually hard to find, and some of them are really impressive! If you are interested in joining the hunt, check out this egg. Do the following exactly as specified.

First, right-click on an empty part of the Windows 95 desktop.
Select New/Folder, and name the folder as: *and now, the moment you've all been waiting for.*
Right-click the folder icon, select Rename and type in: *we proudly present for your viewing pleasure.*
Right-click the folder icon again, select Rename again and type in: *The Microsoft Windows 95 Product Team!*
After you have done the above, double-click to open the folder.
Sit back and enjoy!

If you want to try your hand or find out more about eggs, try the following web-address:

http://www.cnet.com/Content/Features/Howto/Eggs/index.html
They have a collection of easter eggs that you will really love.
http://www.cnet.com/Content/Features/Howto/Eggs/ss26.html
Contains a set of links that contain even more easter eggs.

Happy Hunting!

QUIZ-TIME
This month's questions:
1. Who created PGP?

Last month's question(s):
1. What does the term VRML stand for?
   Virtual Reality Modeling Language.

(Questions, comments, and answers should be sent to DeborahJasek@TRA@TTI.)

PREVIOUS INFOBYTE ISSUES
If you are interested in previous issues of InfoBytes, they and the current issue can be found at http://herman.tamu.edu/~josephk/infobytes.html.

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