

President's letter

This is my first opportunity to greet you all as President following my election at the Vienna conference. Thank you for electing me: I look forward to serving your professional interests to the best of my ability over the coming three years.

The affairs of our Association are governed by the elected Executive Board which meets twice a year and undertakes much work in between meetings. We now have a new Board as well as a new President. Albrecht Häfner continues his sterling work as Secretary General and Chris Clark continues as Editor, but we have a new Treasurer in Pekka Gronow. Each of our three Vice-Presidents has a particular area of responsibility, and the presence of the immediate Past President, Sven Allerstrand, provides important continuity for the new Board.

I believe that the key tasks of the Association are twofold: to enable a rich flow of information between members, and to represent our professional interests to the world beyond. Information about standards, initiatives, and developing practice is shared through our publications, our website, and our annual conference. The Board will also support programmes of work undertaken by Task Forces, Committees, and Sections. Following the successful completion of the IASA cataloguing rules a new Task Force is being set up to consider the complex but important issues arising from the need to select and set priorities for the conservation of analogue recordings by transfer to the digital environment. We will continue to develop a portfolio of policy statements and guides to "best practice" which will provide a source of professional guidance for members, and also provide a firmer basis for presenting our interests to others. We have the opportunity to make common cause with neighbouring professional organisations through the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archive Associations and we also seek opportunities to promote our Association's work through engagement with UNESCO, the European Commission, and other bodies.

A major task each year is the organisation of our principal and flagship event, our annual conference. July 2000 in Singapore will be a memorable event: we are convening with the South East Asia & Pacific Audio-Visual Archives Association (SEAPAVAA). Our colleagues in Singapore are already working hard to plan this event and we can look forward to a rich programme of papers, presentations, visits, and hospitality. We have much to learn from each other and the programme will reflect our determination to hold a joint conference (rather than two conferences sharing the same venue). Renew old friendships, make new ones, improve your professional knowledge, don't miss it!