

# Welcome to the Board Room

*by John F. Covin*



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**F**rom now on, news from your Board of Directors will appear in this space. In this issue, I would like to report on recent Board actions and the upcoming elections.

There were many items discussed and actions taken in a two-day December Board meeting, but the overriding theme or flavor that influenced almost every topic was the feedback Board members were getting from you, the members of our organization. The common message that each member brought to the Board meeting was that we must do a better job singularly and collectively of communicating with our MTA membership. This column is an attempt to fill the communications gap and regularly report to you about the Board's activities.

Another important notion that surfaced during our two days together was that the Board is somehow "invisible" and is comprised of "unknown entities." We have not determined fully how to "personalize" the Board as a collection of individuals: elected representatives with sensitivity, caring attitudes, intelligence, and a com-

mitment to making our organization as good as it can possibly be. We'd like to hear how you think we can change the perception so that the Board becomes, in everyone's mind, a working group of real people.

A third common theme in our talks was that our members need better opportunities for communicating to the Board, to the staff, and with one another. Member Ed de Moel's view of the recent organizational name change process, printed on page 49 of this issue, illustrates this need. Publishing letters here may be one way of airing members' views. The exchange of ideas and perspectives within an organization strengthens the organization's ability to serve its members.

I encourage you to express your views on MTA issues to your Board of Directors and the MTA staff. (See the list of Board members on page 23.) This can be in person, via a letter, via an article, or by attending Board meetings. Our belief is that feedback, both positive and negative, is like a beacon to excellence. Without it, we are in the dark.

To those of you who had concerns about the process of electing a Board of Directors, I express hope that you have already noticed a subtle, but significant, change. In this issue, there are announcements that "the floor is open for nominations." The deadline announced earlier is now extended to ensure that everyone interested in running for a position has ample time to do so. The Nominating Committee announcement on page 19 lists each

committee member's name so that you can discuss freely the nominations process and the positions that are open for election with them. If you want to represent the membership in one of these capacities, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members, a Board member, or the MTA staff.

Our focus at the December Board meeting was on communication between the Board and the membership. Improving the mechanisms you can use to voice your interest and opinions, and to participate in the processes of change will be a priority for us.

While the Board recognizes that decisions involving change probably will never please everyone, we are committed to processes of change that are open and collaborative in nature. With more collaboration, the beacon becomes brighter, and the path to excellence is clearer. ❖

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