2009 was a challenging one for SES as we continued our transition to the future. Several years ago, the SES Board decided to institute term limits in an effort to bring new talented individuals to the forefront of the Society’s operations. Now, 80 percent of the Board members have less than two years on the Board, so we have accomplished that goal. The Board also made the decision to delegate more responsibility to the talent resident within the SES committees. These decisions have been monumental in the continued successful growth and stature of our Society.

This year businesses everywhere faced uncertain futures due to the global economic crisis. Add to that the disruptions that naturally accompany a transition to a new Executive Director and relocation of the head office and you can see why our all-volunteer Board was working overtime, as were the all-volunteer members of the Conference Planning Committee. This concerted effort has culminated in a most successful 58th annual conference in Toronto. Although we are in the process of developing multiple streams of revenue to support the Society in a more stable way, currently the revenue generated by the annual conference is essentially the lifeblood of our financial strength. We salute all of you who helped to make this year’s conference the major success that it was.

We were all indeed honored this year by the participation of our keynote speaker, Rob Steele, Secretary-General, International Organization for Standardization based in Geneva, Switzerland. His presentation, "The Answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything –is the Answer really 42?" was most thought-provoking and set the stage for the rest of the conference. This is demonstrative of the high caliber of individuals that make this annual conference the preeminent event for the industry.

We had other things to be proud of this year. SES recently announced, in conjunction with Intellectual Property Shield and IHS, the Standards Aware™ Education Package. This is a set of eLearning courses to educate college students about standards and how to apply them in the workplace.

Our SES certification program is now offering the new Associate Standards Professional (AStd) certification, which anyone in industry should seriously consider obtaining. Industry needed this program and SES has delivered. This designation promises to become more prevalent on business cards as the program permeates the industry. It now appears after my name on mine and generates conversation about the standards industry and SES.

To explore new electronic tools of which we may be able to avail ourselves, this year we conducted our first Internet simulcast of the annual conference. This technology has proven to be very promising for SES. In addition to providing a way to participate for those who were on travel restrictions and unable to physically attend the conference, we now have audio recordings of the sessions to capture these moments for future reference.

In summary, to excerpt a few words from Charles Dickens’ Tale of Two Cities, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times … it was the spring of hope …. we had everything before us.” This next year is already off to a good start and promises to be another successful year for the Society. We hope to see you all next August in Boston at the 59th annual conference.