

PUBLISHER'S NOTES

A Brief History of Our Time Together

Jack K. Mowry, Editor and Publisher

In the Beginning. It was St. Patrick's day, March 1966. Lois and I were drinking cheap booze at the home of the advertising agency rep for B&K Instruments in Cleveland, OH. I had spent 11 years as a sales engineer selling Brüel & Kjær instrumentation throughout the U.S. I loved my job, I loved the Danes and I loved the product line. But, I was not getting along with the boss and I had to figure out what I should do next with my life. The rep suggested that we start a magazine. Lois and I both agreed that was a good idea. I knew the acoustics business; I knew many of the potential advertisers and they knew me. At that time, there was no publication providing commercial communications services to the noise and vibration control market so there was an obvious opening. We proceeded to form Acoustical Publications, Inc. to fill the void.

What should we name the magazine? We wanted to cover the noise and vibration control market. Noise, however, has negative connotations so we chose *Sound & Vibration* and S&V was born. We found an office near our home in Bay Village, OH, and did the legal work to set up the company as an Ohio corporation.

So, after some serious discussion, we covered the questions: What do we know about publishing a magazine? Answer: Nothing. How will we support it? Sell advertising. How will we handle the business side and collect readers for this publication? Lois could use her systems engineering background to organize and maintain various files and lists for the company on a computer.

Business Model. We decided to cover only practical engineering in S&V. Science and research were effectively covered by various society journals. We selected the topics: Noise and Vibration Control; Dynamic Measurements; Structural Analysis; Computer-Aided Engineering; Machinery Reliability; and Dynamic Testing.

Editorial Staff. I wanted to be the Publisher and I needed to find an Editor. I was good friends with Lew Goodfriend and Paul Ostergaard of the acoustical consulting firm Goodfriend-Ostergaard Associates (now Lewis S. Goodfriend & Associates, Whippany, NJ). So I hot footed to Cedar Knolls, NJ. I said, "Lew, I want to start a monthly magazine covering practical engineering in the noise and vibration control field. But I wanted to just be the publisher." Lew commented, "I've been thinking about starting an acoustical engineering magazine, but I just wanted to be the editor." With the serendipitous help of Lew as Editor, Lois as Circulation Manager and Art director Jerry Garfield, an excellent artist and my housemate for many years prior to my marriage to Lois, we would be able to start publishing. We chose January 1967 for the first issue – we were off and running.

Lew did a fantastic job putting out a monthly editorial for four years. You can only imagine the amount of great writing that he put out the door. Help arrived when Jim Botsford joined the masthead as the first Contributing Editor in 1970. Three more contributing editors were added in 1971 and six more in 1973. Botsford took over as Editor during 1974 and I became both Editor and Publisher in 1975. I continued that job for the next 42 years.

I felt that some of the editorial material we were publishing was beyond my level of expertise and I needed more technical support. When George Fox Lang joined the team in 1988, I knew we had what we needed. George describes himself as "a mechanical engineer by education, an electronics engineer by instinct, a mathematician of necessity and a writer by inclination and passion." Dave Formenti, at one time one of our contributing editors and also a smart guy, once said "George Fox Lang has forgotten more than I ever knew." George has been my valued friend and the "brains" of the organization. He started writing for us in the early 70s and became Associate Editor in 1988. He has authored and coauthored some of the finest editorials and articles we have ever published.

A total of 56 contributing editors have graced the pages of S&V with provocative and beautifully-crafted editorials. These men



Jack and Lois Mowry in 2012. Lois has been the S&V Business Manager from the beginning.



Associate Editor George Fox Lang.



Assistant Editor Larry Basar during a bicycling trip in Italy.

and women were the "best of the best" that I could persuade to write for the magazine. I have also counted over a dozen "guest editors" who have contributed their expertise. They all have our deepest gratitude for their service during the 51-year life of S&V.

Circulation. After leaving my job with B&K Instruments in August 1966, I needed to design a qualified circulation profile and circulation update system. Lois resigned her job as a computer systems engineer with IBM to handle the task. She designed the system that we have used with minimal modification for the life of the magazine.

We originally built the mailing list for *Sound & Vibration* from a series of mailings that consisted of a qualified subscription form with postpaid return and an invitation letter. We ended up with about 8,000 sub cards which Lois and I coded during the Christmas Holidays in 1966. I packed up the finished documents and delivered the box to United Airfreight to ship to the circulation fulfillment firm in Denver, CO that we were going to use. I told the agent to insure the box for a million dollars. He queried, "What in the world do you have in that box?" I commented, "I have my new business in that box, and if you lose it, I want a million dollars."

S&V circulation was computer processed right from the beginning. We became a member of BPA (Business Publications Audit of Circulation, now BPA International) in 1968. It has been expensive and a lot of work to meet their audit requirements, but it was part of the quality service that we wished to provide. Some years later we transferred our list to a Chicago firm. In 1986, Lois and I decided to bring all circulation processing in house. We acquired our first PC, a database program, and BASIC interpreter and compiler from IBM (circa 1987) and I wrote all the software code which has worked very well during the ensuing years. We filed a circulation statement in June and December every year from 1968 to 2017.

Maintaining an audited circulation list is almost a full-time job. We maintained the list from our post-paid subscription card and an application form on our web site www.SandV.com. The list is 100% direct-request from S&V readers and was coded for primary job function, business and industry, geographical area and product interest. The age of the requests are listed as one, two or three years in accordance with BPA requirements and the list has been updated monthly. All subscription documents were individually keyboarded and entered into an "update file." The

update file was then merged with the working circulation list each month and checked for errors. It is safe to say that the list has been meticulously maintained by our circulation administrators who have done an excellent job over the years.

Our qualified domestic circulation peaked in 1985 at just over 19,000. It started to decline shortly thereafter at an average rate of about 6%/year. Domestic circulation fell to 17,600 by 1998 and 4,700 this year. Non-qualified paid circulation fell from 817 to 133 from 1998 to 2017. I'd hoped that the deterioration would eventually bottom out and maybe even increase a little. But it never happened. This was just one of the major reasons for terminating publication of S&V.

Production. *Sound & Vibration* has utilized almost every available production and printing process during the five decades plus life of the magazine. It was printed by web offset from the beginning. We provided typed copy to the printer we used initially. Artwork for figure images was prepared manually and photographed to produce positive prints for paste up. Type was set in metal using Linotype equipment. Type galleys were sent back for paste up using a light table and layout template. The printer assembled the type and figure images, negatives were made of the finished pages and plates were prepared for printing.

In 1975 we switched to a new printer and I prepared camera-ready pages completely in house. We used a service in Cleveland that had Berthold (a German company) typesetting equipment. I subsequently acquired a Berthold mini-cassette tape drive, fabricated an interface board for our IBM PC and wrote a program to convert ASCII keystrokes to Berthold code. I even made a glass type font that contained Greek and math characters that were not available from Berthold. I used a local service to make negatives from my page layouts. The negs were retouched and sent back to the printer for press work.

All that manual work changed dramatically with the introduction of Adobe Postscript in 1984 and Aldus Pagemaker in 1986. We graduated to digital production from 1996 on and have used Adobe software products since. We have commissioned three servers, acquired numerous notebook and mini-tower computers, many ways to connect to the Internet, many operating systems and piles of software during the 51-year life of the magazine.

Producing article illustrations in our signature yellow background has been a big job. Larry Basar came with us in 2005 as Assistant Editor to both prepare illustrations and rough in articles. We started with a Microsoft WORD file with illustrations embedded and Larry produced page layouts using Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop. Larry is our Photoshop and photography genius and he produced the front covers of each issue. I did the final work on the articles and put the magazine together each month. We sent PDF (Portable Document Format) files and high-quality printouts of the pages to Publishers Press in Kentucky, our printer for many years, and they printed, bound and mailed the magazines. Larry is also the S&V Webmaster.

Engineering Conferences. We had a brief sojourn into the engineering conference/exhibition business. We launched Noise-Expo in 1973 as a venue for presentation of papers and training courses on noise and vibration control and a product exhibition. We published hard-bound proceedings of the conference papers. NoiseExpo was presented nine times in a number of locations. It was a lot of work but, I don't think we made a dime from the effort. We wanted to have a continued presence in appropriate engineering conferences and we have supported five or more conferences every year since 1982. Every show issue we published featured brief exhibitor descriptions and articles unique to the conference topic. It is important to note that we derived most of the articles we published from these conferences. We chose the "best of the best" papers, worked with the authors and reformatted the papers into high-quality magazine articles. Authors sometimes asked us if the articles were "peer reviewed." In a way, they were since they were always presented to a "peer" audience and previously published in a conference proceedings. All of the major editorial items from 1996 on and some prior to 1996 are available for free download on our web site www.SandV.com. We will maintain the web site for the foreseeable future.

Digital Edition. Over the years, I did an unscientific survey while attending engineering conferences. I asked, "If you receive a paper and digital edition of an engineering magazine, do you read the digital edition?" The answer was always "no." Paper is portable, an electronic reader is not required and it is easily archived. We never seriously thought about publishing a digital edition of S&V.

Special Projects. We should mention a number of special projects that were completed over the years. These projects included five-year anniversary issues published from 1972 to 2017. These issues were considerably larger than our usual monthly issues and featured editorials and articles of major significance.

Contributing Editor Dave Formenti wrote an excellent *Questions and Answers* column from 1999 to 2000. Many pertinent questions were raised with comprehensive answers.

Contributing Editor Eric Ungar wrote a series of 26 editorials entitled *Acoustics from A to Z*. Art director Jerry Garfield did the illustrations. There was one verse for each letter of the alphabet; each dealt lightheartedly with some aspect of acoustics, each was illustrated by a cartoon structured around the letter, and each was followed by a brief summary of related facts. The series was published as editorials in monthly issues of S&V, republished in the 35th Anniversary Edition of S&V and in a booklet published for Acentech, Cambridge, MA.

Books published by Acoustical Publications, Incorporated:

The Little Brown Book was published for the Case Alumni Association of Case Institute of Technology. The book is filled with significant relationships between numbers and the physical/political world in which we live. It was based on the book *Wonders in Numbers* written by my long-time friend and business associate Anthony J. Schneider.

Can You Hear Me? Making the World a Quieter Place, My Life as an Unwitting Entrepreneur was the life history of Martin Hirschorn of Industrial Acoustics Company (IAC), Bronx, NY. IAC was a major advertiser in S&V for many years and Hirschorn authored or coauthored many important articles.

Journey to Greatness, The Story of Brüel & Kjær was written by Ghita Borring, a Danish journalist, and me. John S. Mitchell, one of our contributing editors, helped with much of the material covered by the book and his editing was invaluable. We were very fortunate that the book was finished and presented to the founders of B&K, Dr. Per V. Brüel and Mr. Viggo Kjær before they passed away.

Advertising. *Sound & Vibration* has been supported primarily by advertising sales. For the first three years of our business existence, I had to present paid courses on noise and vibration measurements in order to keep bread on the table. Ad sales in subsequent years increased dramatically and we regularly booked about 40-50% advertising in 40- to 64-page issues. Ad sales in the last 10-20 years have shown a steady decline and we have had to live with about 20-30% advertising and USPS minimum magazine size of 24-page issues. During the last five years, I have had to almost "fight" for every ad and the looming death of the magazine was apparent. We could not continue publication without adequate financial support. Our advertising prospects for 2018 dried up almost completely and we decided to terminate publication of S&V with this December 2017 issue.

Donations. We will maintain our company, Acoustical Publications, Inc., for the indefinite future, but we intend to downsize the office. We have a lot of books that we wish to donate or scrap. We will stock a small quantity of all the issues that we have published. They are for sale at \$5.00/copy to anyone that would like to complete their collection. I am always impressed when I learn of readers that have saved every copy they ever received. We must have been doing things right for all these years. Please send me an e-mail (sv@mindspring.com) if you are interested in acquiring any books or magazines. Your comments on the publication of *Sound & Vibration* would be appreciated.

Thanks for the Memories. So what have we accomplished over the past 51 years? We built a media platform to present the outstanding work of thousands of authors and dozens of editors to a well-defined audience. Their work was distributed FREE to all who were interested. I think we all deserve a heartfelt "pat on the back." It has been a great ride!