Publisher Leaves a Process Improvement Legacy

Process Improvement has always been a key interest for Reuel "Rudy" S. Alder. In fact, process improvement was so important to him that in May of 1988, he was one of the founders of the Air Force's Software Technology Support Center (STSC). There were only five members when the STSC first started, but these five people sat down together and did some planning on how to achieve their goal of sharing process improvement ideas with the rest of the software community. Their successful ideas helped create one of the leading organizations for software process improvement. One of those initial ideas was to publish a newsletter with process improvement information. CROSSTALK started with about four pages of articles and 200 subscribers, but the useful information combined with the great price [free] generated a much larger audience during the years. CROSSTALK now has more than 18,000 subscribers, and we estimate that we have an additional 20,000 on-line readers.

Rudy has been involved with CROSSTALK through this entire effort. While he will continue to help lead STSC efforts, he is moving out of the position of publisher. As a result, Tracy Stauder is moving into the publisher's position. Tracy is not new to CROSSTALK; she was the associate publisher from 1996 through 1999. She also believes in process improvement; one of her first tasks as associate publisher was to work with Rudy to lead CROSSTALK's own process improvement effort. They started this effort by restructuring and documenting the journal's development process. Before this process was created, we never knew when the next issue would be published until it was actually sent to the printer. Now with a clear process that starts months in advance for each issue, we know that CROSSTALK will be published each month and are confident that the articles will contain useful information. Our process improvement efforts continue with planning new and exciting issue themes and implementing color covers.

By the way, I'm not totally new to CROSSTALK myself. I have had three articles published, written a Publisher's Note, and helped with other supporting functions to the CROSSTALK staff.

We start this month's issue with *Perspectives on the Software Engineering Process Group.* Change is not easy; it takes exceptional people to effectively lead a process improvement effort. This article includes several perspectives of and from the Software Engineering Process Group at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. *Raytheon Stands Firm on Benefits of Process Improvement* is an interview that delves into process improvement successes gained on the path to Level 5 while undergoing three mergers.

Process improvement can take many avenues, and Mike Evans discusses a process improvement method developed by the U.S. Navy's Software Program Manager's Network in *SPMN Director Identifies 16 Critical Software Practices* and Don Lucero and Fred Hall discuss their practical approach to software measurement in *The Best Measurement Tool Is Your Telephone.*

In our December issue, we promised you a contrasting point of view when we presented Don Reifer et al.'s, *Is Ada Dead or Alive within the Weapons System World?* Now we deliver on that promise with Ben Brosgol's *Ada in the 21st Century* and a few letters to the editor.

We always welcome readers' comments on the content of the journal and how we can improve. We will continue to improve under CROSSTALK's new leadership.

Elizabeth Starrett

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Associate Publisher