



Dean Says:

A Look Backward and A Look Ahead

With the publication of this issue of *The Moore Wilson Signaling Report*, I complete the sixth and last issue of Volume 6 of this publication. It has taken me a while to get here: this last Volume of six issues has consumed nearly twenty-two months of publication time.

I took a few minutes while I was resting my eyes from "computer screen fatigue" to glance back through the previous 33 issues.

I remember well the first time Wayne Moore and I sat in the basement office of Jerry Laughlin's house in Norfolk, MA. It was mid-February, 1989. Wayne had driven down from Lowell, MA. Jeff Moore was there. He had ridden along with me as I drove up from Hartford, CT.

"My good friend David Mains of *Chapel of the Air* thinks I should write a book. He has been urging me, in a very persuasive way, to share my knowledge with others in a permanent manner that only a book can do." I told the assembled brethren.

"I've talked to Wayne about it because he has an interest in writing. He

wants to round out his efforts at educating others in our fire protection field. We've decided that the fire alarm industry is too volatile right now to write a book. With the introduction of so much new technology, and especially with the promise of a reorganization of the NFPA signaling project, a book seems to be ill-timed. So, we've talked about a newsletter."

Jerry Laughlin, a free-lance desktop publisher was already producing two fire protection newsletters. Jerry had formerly been the editor of NFPA's *Fire Command* magazine and was a skillful writer who had an excellent understanding of desktop publishing.

The newsletter would mainly be questions and answers, with a few news items, a personality piece featuring someone in the industry, and a couple of opinion pieces. We even had a name: *The Moore-Wilson Signaling Report*. The big question was what to charge.

"I've just received a study of limited-subject, professional newsletters," Jerry reported. "Some cost as much as \$300 per year for four, twelve-page issues."

"That's outrageous," Wayne declared. "We want to cover expenses, but we don't want to gouge our readers."

"I estimate that it will cost you about \$50 to \$70 per year to fulfill each subscription." Jerry explained. "That includes desktop publishing, printing, binding, mailing, office expenses, and a small honorarium for the authors."

"So let's go with \$60," Wayne interjected.

"Let's try \$66 with an introductory price of \$56." I retorted.

Jerry Laughlin helped through the first six issues. In the middle of the year, he moved his family to Montgomery, AL. After the move, Jerry felt he could not justify the time the subscription fulfillment was taking. So I took over the role of publisher, doing the fulfillment and the desktop publishing.

While most of the writing, editing, production and administrative tasks have been up to me, fortunately I've had lots of help. From the beginning Wayne has faithfully provided his opinion piece, taken first stab at answering the questions, and provided an occasional feature article.

Along the way, John Cholin has contributed several multiple-issue technical articles. Jeff Moore, Bob Schifiliti, Art Black, Richard Kleinman, and Ed Leedy have often sent story leads. Other readers have sent questions.

As the number of subscribers has climbed to over a thousand, including one very large multiple-subscriber order from a major manufacturer, the newsletter has taken more time. Producing *TM-WSR* as a hobby has created a very ragged production schedule.

Looking to the future, Volume 7 will consist of four twelve-page issues. I have reduced the subscription price from \$66.00 to \$36.00. I plan to maintain the same number of pages devoted to questions and answers.

Dropping four pages means that there will be fewer news items and the personality sketch will disappear. But in all, with the current heavy load at my place of employment, it appears that four twelve-page issues will be easier to manage as a hobby than six sixteen-page issues have been.

Most importantly, in this moment of reflection, I fully realize that *TM-WSR* would not exist without the continued interest of its subscribers. So at this time of reviewing the past and looking to the future, my most sincere feelings of gratitude belong to you, even as you read these words. □

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