



DEBRA BAKER
(M1989 F 1992)

Debra Baker's qualifications: I began my wireless-industry reporting career in 1981, creating and editing the first product tabloid in the industry. Since that time, I have reported for every major U.S. wireless magazine and newsletter, and I currently am vice president and managing editor at T3i Group LLC, which has four divisions serving the international communications research, tariffing, consulting and Web content arenas. I have been an active member and fellow (1992) of the Radio Club since the mid-1980s, I've been a board member, and I've chaired the Publications Committee for many years. I also head the current Centennial Celebration Committee, coordinating the plans for next year's 100th anniversary in Washington, D.C. I was awarded the Radio Club's Special Services award in 2004.

My vision for the Radio Club of America: I was brought into this Club by the likes of Fred Link and Mercy Contreras, and I would like to continue the same all-inclusiveness and vision they had at that time as we move into the next 100 years of our history. But I want to do more.

While I "honor the past," I believe the Club has become mired in its own history. I think we need to take a more pro-active view of the current and future of the wireless industry, with all its players and technologies. This includes many verticals not addressed by the Club during its first 100 years, with the satellite industry, the cable industry, and the computer hardware and software industry shining examples of this. As such, I believe we need to actively recruit the people who now are running the wireless operations of each of these segments and more along with those still in college. We have talked about and made promises to increase our outreach to high schools and colleges but it usually ends up just being lip service. By re-energizing our state organizations, we could get members out there into the trenches. One talk per month to a group is not too much to ask.

I also believe the Club needs to take the next step when it comes to fundraising. We have depended on personal donations along with donations from a finite set of companies coupled with monies raised from breakfasts and regional events, and we've managed. But managing is not enough if we want to grow the Club and its mission. We have discussed hiring a professional fundraiser, and I would like to resurrect that idea. I think we need to have someone with the know-how to give the Club the financial shot in the arm it needs.

For the first time, next year an annual Radio Club awards dinner and banquet will be held in a different venue than New York City. A recent survey of Club members showed most have not attended the annual banquet for a number of reasons, and I believe (judging from the success of our regional gatherings) we could attract more attendees if we had the annual event in a different place each year across the country. After working with our agents to secure the Washington, D.C., venue, I know we can be just as successful elsewhere.

And, as a board member, aside from trying to solve some of the ethical and behavioral problems the Club has experienced in recent months, I want to work to overcome the "80/20 rule," with 20 percent of the Club members doing 80 percent of the work. In our case, it is more than 90/10, and we need to facilitate more member involvement than just sending in a check once a year. All Radio Club members have many things going on in their lives – work, family, church, sports, civic organizations and other professional groups – and board members and committee chairs need to break tasks down and delegate them in such ways as to make them manageable for one person to take on and to experience success.