Editor’s note:
In this section, Dr. Judith Hale interviews International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) Members, so that readers can learn about colleagues. She is featuring a new member/emerging professional, along with a notable long-term member of the Society.

Steve Monroe leads two ISPI committees—Engagement and Community Service. As Engagement Chair, he discusses membership and volunteer opportunities. Guy Wallace personally invited this editor to join ISPI many years ago. He continues to show his dedication to the field by serving as a Historian for ISPI.

We hope you enjoy reading!

If you are interested in learning more and/or contributing to this project, please send an email to pij@ispi.org and show Know Your Colleagues on the subject line.

Nancy Crain Burns, Editor-in-Chief

INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN D. MONROE, PHD

What attracted you to PI/HPT/ISPI?

What attracted me to performance improvement? Honestly, I sort of tripped into it. My entire working life, I’ve been actively pursuing my passion for education and training. I love to teach! This passion started while serving in the Navy, where I served from 1980 to 1990. One particular instance, while working as a Chaplain’s Assistant onboard the USS Nimitz and senior to others in my position among our carrier strike group, I started making instructional videos and sending them to others with my job type to help them improve their craft. That was when my passion for teaching and training began to take hold.

Interestingly enough, after leaving the Navy and wanting to go back to school, my undergraduate work was a BA in music. I had dreams of becoming a composer writing musicals. In fact, for my senior project, I wrote a musical called Animal Farm based on George Orwell’s book. The audience the first night was sparse, but by the last night, the place was packed. That was fun, but the family was my key focus. With a wife and two small boys, I decided NOT to be a starving artist and went back to work in industry.

I started working for Airgas, a welding and safety retail company, in 1998 as a truck driver and eventually moving into sales. However, the training bug retook hold, and I went back to school for a degree in Adult and Higher Education. After graduating, my region within Airgas promoted me to regional training director. The dream to become a full-time trainer came true. However, not long after getting the job, I discovered I was out of my depths—I needed to know more. So, I went back to school.

I found Capella University offered a PhD in Training and Performance Improvement. I didn’t know what this Performance Improvement stuff was—but I wanted to learn more about training in the industry. Funny story there, I remember talking with the advisor from Capella, telling them I wanted to work on my PhD in Training and Performance Improvement. The advisor then asked, what kind of work are you doing now?

I told him that I am the regional training director for Airgas. The advisor paused for a moment, then said, “Um, you do know that people pursue this degree just to get the job you have now.” I said, “Oh, well, honestly, I need it to teach me what I should know to succeed in my current work.” And, so I did. I graduated in 2012 from Capella with a PhD in Training and Performance Improvement.

While at Capella, I got what I needed regarding training, but I also found something new that would become my next passion—Human Performance Technology. Also, I then found out about this organization called the ISPI. It
did take a few years, but I eventually made ISPI my home to continue learning and growing within the performance improvement world.

What are some of the works you are most proud of?
I’ve done some good things at Airgas that I’m proud of, but the work I’m most proud of to date is my work within ISPI as the Engagement Committee Chair. I enjoy meeting and helping others succeed. Every conversation I have with new ISPI members and the opportunities I have in connecting them with those who can help them grow within this field makes me feel like I’m meeting my own goals as a human performance technologist.

When people speak/think of you, what do you want them to say/remember?
I want to be remembered for my cheerful smile and encouraging words. When people think of me, I want them to smile and shake their heads, saying—man, he was weird, but he was a lot of fun.

What you do and/or are doing now? Where you can be reached?
I’m still the regional training director at Airgas. I serve both as the Engagement Committee Chair for ISPI International and as the Technical Chair for the Bay Area Boise Idaho Chapter. Members can contact me at steve-monroe@ispi.org.

INTERVIEW WITH GUY W. WALLACE

What attracted you to PI/HPT/ISPI?
On my first day on the job straight out of college in August 1979, I was given three items that influenced my professional development in the world of Instructional Systems Design: (1) a three-page mimeographed newsletter, dated September/October 1970, from Praxis, the consulting firm of Geary A. Rummler and Thomas F. Gilbert, on the topic of “Guidance”—which was also known as Job Aids, and later as Electronic Performance Support Systems; (2) Tom Gilbert’s 1978 book, Human Competence; and (3) Mager and Pipe’s book, Analyzing Performance Problems. I read the first and last of those my first evening after that first day and I was hooked. I even bought four copies of the Mager-Pipe book on day two, to send to my four best friends from college.

What I then taught and practiced was a derivative of a Geary Rummler approach to Instructional Analysis.

Not quite a month later, I attended my first NSPI chapter meeting, in Detroit, after my boss and a coworker, and I drove the 95 miles from Saginaw down I-75 to the hotel meeting location. There I met Brian Desautels, who told me the story of Frank Wydra cutting the overhead projection cord on the previous presenter as he proclaimed that, “this was bull” and everyone was to reconvene at the bar.

As someone not schooled formally in training and development, as I had been hired for my Radio/TV/Film degree and my three years of field experience at Wickes Lumber back in my college town, I found my professional home. At NSPI (now ISPI), I would learn professional processes and practices that were research-based and therefore avoid the invalid practices that I was warned existed throughout the discipline.

My years of active involvement started on the drive back to Saginaw when my coworker told me that we had both been signed up to the chapter’s newsletter committee and that she would cover my first assignment the next day at work. Seven months later, I attended my first annual conference in Dallas, where I was introduced to many of the Thought Leaders of NSPI and soon became active at that level of the Society.

What is some of the work you are most proud of?
Besides my consulting work for my corporate and government clients, where some of my client’s work received awards at AT&T, Change Healthcare, General Motors, HP, Imperial Oil, and Siemens Building Technologies, I am most proud of my contributions to the development of others in the profession through my presentations at ISPI (59 to date), to chapters (41 to date), and the cofounding of the Charlotte NC chapter of ISPI in 2009.

And I am also very proud of being the 2010 recipient of ISPI’s Honorary Life Member Award.

When people speak/think of you, what do you want them to say/remember?
That he followed the guidance that Geary Rummler gave him in 1999, that because “you cannot really pay back your mentors, you have to pay it forward.”
Short bio
Currently, Guy continues his consulting work as a Performance Analyst and Instructional Architect for his corporate clients for whom he conducts performance-based Instructional Systems Design. He also serves on the Executive Advisory Board of the Learning Development Accelerator and serves as a Friend of IBSTPI—the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction. He may be reached via his website at: www.eppic.biz

Judith Hale, PhD, CPT, CACP, CDT, and ibstpi Fellow, is the CEO of the Center for International Credentials, LLCs. She is the author of nine books on performance improvement. The Performance Consultant’s Fieldbook: How to Improve Organizations and People, 2nd edition, is used as a text by numerous universities. Performance-Based Certification: How to Design a Valid, Defensible, Cost-Effective Program, 2nd edition, received the Outstanding Communication Award from ISPI in 2014. Judy has served as president of ISPI and director of Certification for ISPI. She can be reached at Judy@HaleCenter.org.