First, please allow me to express my appreciation for your invitation to speak here today! The first person out of the box at 8:30 isn't the best position - however, it does beat the last person before cocktails - also it's good to see so many with whom I've enjoyed their acquaintance back to the time this organization was chartered.

The title of my brief comments before you is "The Best is Yet to Come" which can mean almost anything - in keeping with the overall program theme of "Electronic Age." Let's confine the theme to UCS - Uniform Communication Systems. Hope that doesn't disappoint too many of you!

For me to carry the ball for UCS this morning is another honor with the presence here of Doyle Eiler of FMI (much involved with the Joint Industry Commission, and Jerry Peck - President of NAWGA, a key sponsor along with FMI, and Lew Norwood who represented NARGUS on several occasions)!

Perhaps it was my age as one of the oldest Joint Industry Commission members that was a factor in the selection. From the initial formation of the old computer to computer Joint Industry Committee, I've had the opportunity to serve as the NPBA representative for over five years of formal and some not so formal discussions. Virtually all of the not so formal discussions are well behind us and nothing would be served to rehash the differences between the GMA representatives and those of FMI, NAWGA, NARGUS and CFDA, alone with NFBA - all who financed this project at various levels of contribution. Consider for a moment my position at that time with five principals and five customers dead-locked and all eyes on me to break the tie!

As I said that's behind us and great harmony now exists in what I believe to be the second joint industry effort of real magnitude. The first one - UPC made possible the scanning discussions of yesterday and provided significant encouragement that joint industry efforts are possible, in spite of the "Mark of the Beast" connotation mentioned by Vicke. Most important is the identification that the effort to develop the output has been industry driven and association guided which is what it would be. Once, purpose was developed and agreed upon, members of the industry did the construction along with the assistance of A. D. Little in the feasibility study - Touche Ross during the committee development of both the message and the communication standards. Both of these organization activities were vital to the development of two manuals.

Recognition must be given as well to the 80 or so industry members who served on both these committees and provided many hours of their expertise for UCS to forge ahead.
Now we are in the Pilot Implementation State under the expert guidance of TDCC - that stands for Transportation Data Coordinating Committee. They are a non-profit group formed in the transportation and warehousing distribution fields which for almost ten years have been working towards uniform communication objectives such as ours. I'm proud to say, with the strong industry membership thrust, we have moved very fast in comparison to other outside industry efforts in the past.

Participating in the Pilot Implementation are the following link-ups: Safeway/Kraft, Giant with both Nabisco (direct) and Cheesborough through a broker in Washington, RMT, Ralphs/Quaker Oats, Wetterau/P&G, and our company, Sales Race linked between Super Value and Dow Chemical. Most pilots have now exchanged transmission tapes and everyone hopes to be operational by the first of the year. If I can phrase concerns for cost versus benefit without being too technical, I'll try. From the outset the Joint Industry Committee wanted players of all sizes to participate. That is possible no matter what size equipment using Service Bureaus as a phone network, mail boxes (I'll explain in a moment) that means both Byzych and Aszuch commercials are feasible - in our own link up with Super Value, due to costs at the outset, we plan to use Tymnet, and Super Value is using General Electric's network.

Equipment usage ranges from host computers such as 370/158, or IBM's System 34 with modifications and even separate IBM Series I for just communication, also with modifications. The Series I won't translate messages but the host can do that. What we are striving for is at moderate costs, allow everyone to play.

Recognizing the parental concern and the propriortership of each company's MIS system and the UCS approach requires no changes at home - only in what form the messages are sent to others.