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## IEEE Richmond - Mid-year 2017 Report

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Mon, Jul 17, 2017 at 10:37 AM

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To: Region 3

From: Steve Kemp, Richmond Section Chair

Subject: 2017 Mid-year Report

Date: 7/17/2017

### Accomplishments

- \* Three members recognized at the Richmond Joint Engineers Committee (RJEC) Engineers Week Banquet in February. (This was the full slate of awards. There are 20 organizations that are members of RJEC.)
- \* Three Section members attended SoutheastCon 2017 (one as a judge, and the Chair and Immediate Past Chair/Acting Secretary attended the Committee meeting).
- \* Three members got jobs through a recent Professional development meeting.
- \* The Chair supported the IEEE MOVE effort, took all relevant Red Cross Disaster Services-Technology (DST) training and acquired an Amateur Radio license in an effort to better understand the emergency communications environment and which resources are most relevant to the IEEE MOVE program.
- \* Supported the Jamboree 2017 emeritbadge effort. About 20 volunteers from across IEEE\*USA have gathered for this, perhaps 4-5 from the Richmond Section.
- \* Young Professionals Affinity Group formed (approved by Section, petition filed, awaiting Region, YP and MGA approval).
- \* Initial discussions held in the formation of a ComSoc Chapter.
- \* We have two qualified volunteers (mid-career professionals, one a professor, the other in industry) who have agreed to take the lead as IEEE Day Ambassadors.
- \* We are mid-way through a multi-year effort to spread out the structure of the Richmond Section, from a thin, vertical organization, to a broad, multi-Chapter and multi-Affinity Group entity. In 2016, Chapters in three Technical Societies (Computer and EMBS/Magnetics-joint) were formed and are active. In 2017, a YP AG has been formed and a ComSoc Chapter is being considered. The strategy is to promote greater member engagement, and to develop a pool of experienced volunteers at the Chapter and AG level, who can more easily step into Section level office and committee responsibilities.

## Obstacles

\* A legacy Chapter has been running well for a number of years and has developed a successful day-long seminar format for their meetings. However, they do little to support Section activities, which is a continuing problem. Their experience is not shared with others and attendance at ExCom meetings is sporadic at best. The Chapter performs as a direct report to IEEE, but does little to participate in the MGA Section structure which is detrimental to the overall organization.

\* A Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Student Member incentive (complimentary 1st year dues) fell off the tracks in Spring Semester. This program was at the initiative of the VCU ECE Department Head, subsidized by the university with support from the Section. It will be revived in the Fall. This adversely impacted our membership rolls in 2017. We plan to correct that as the Fall Semester begins.

\* The Virginia State University (VSU) Student Branch lost its Faculty Counselor without notice early in the year. A mathematics professor has been appointed in this capacity, and we have yet to connect. This too, greatly degraded the Student Membership. We plan to make contact and offer support before the Fall Semester begins.

\* The Richmond Section is woefully short of officers and volunteers. It may be time for a new Chair, who believes the strategy is right, but failed on implementation.

\* Senior Members have been nominated individually, but the Richmond has had no roundup to date in 2017.

\* The WIE AG situation, in which members have shown little interest, has degraded. Three interim Chairs have not been able to invigorate the organization. The Section Chair now believes we made a mistake in looking to the Young Professional contingent to revitalize this organization, but it appears that YP Women do NOT identify as Women Engineers and resent the label. Three years of working on this without positive results has been exhausting. The Section Chair believes that one, last effort could be made, attempting to identify a mid-career or seasoned professional to take charge-someone who can appreciate the value of this organization, the mentoring and professional development opportunities that can accelerate a career. Recent graduates are too busy acclimating to their new career to have any interest in differentiating themselves from their peers. But, there is an issue. For example, while VCU has the highest proportion of women engineering students of any university in North America, it has only two in the Electrical and Computer Engineering program. This underscores the need for an organization such as IEEE WIE, but it needs to be led from the top, not the bottom, of the career professionals. We will be looking for such leadership and if we do not find it, the Richmond AG will have to close. This has been a major struggle and a failure on our part to focus on the YP segment, which lacks focused interest in the WIE mission and the needed management experience to implement it.

\* Following the IEEE Corporate guidance for Sections Congress, the Section Chair elected to not attend SC17, having been to SC14, and the Richmond ExCom approved the Organizer of our new YP AG to attend as the Section Delegate.

\* We are overdue for an election at the Section level, and are woefully short of nominees. (Zero being the actual number. Not sure what to do here, but the Section needs some fresh faces.)

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