

SSIT President's Report

Gerald L. Engel

July 16, 2011

I will be making a short presentation of things that have occurred since our meeting in April. First off, I want to thank Greg Adamson for agreeing to take on the leadership of the SSIT Membership Committee. Greg will be presenting a number of his ideas later on in the meeting. Deepak Mathur has agreed to serve as editor of the SSIT Newsletter. I appreciate Deepak's willingness to take on this task, and encourage everyone to submit short reports regarding their projects, and soliciting the membership to take part in our activities. Finally Tim Harris has agreed to continue as the SSIT WEB Coordinator. Again I encourage everyone to provide input to Tim regarding the WEB site.

At the March meeting of the BOG I noted that, based on the February 2011 IEEE Board Series of meetings, there appeared to be a kinder and gentler TAB in 2011. This has shown to continue in a number of initiatives and general actions that are too numerous to list. There were, however several things that were initiated at the meeting that do have some potential impacts on us, and I went to at least introduce them, and discuss them as is appropriate. I have a couple of these discussed in my President's message for the upcoming issue of T and S. These are the potential changes in the membership model to include one society "basic" membership with all IEEE dues, and the changes in the way budgetary problems of societies as well programmatic problem will be addressed. Rather than repeating them here, I have attached an unedited copy of my column to this report. Certainly I will be happy to discuss this as needed.

Let me quickly review the bookkeeping issues from the meeting series. The publication price recommendations were all approved. Fees for periodicals were also approved. A requirements was added to the procedures for TAB elections. The number of candidates on ballots may be no less than 1.5 times the number of positions that will be elected. So, as I understand it, for an election to select 3 BOG members we would need at least 5 candidates on the ballot. Exceptions to this will have to be approved by the TAB Vice President. Do, note, however, that elections by BOGs are regarded as appointments, not elections, and so the described requirements do not apply.

Work is proceeding on the Sections Congress. As a part of the increasing cooperation between TAB and the Geographical OUs, TAB will have a stronger role in this years Congress. I will be attending as will most of the other Society Presidents. There will be a number of opportunities for interaction between the TAB folks and the other attendees. As a result I have been assigned to be at the Division 6 Poster, and at the TAB exhibit at various times. Any ideas, suggestions or handouts will be much appreciated.

In the background reading material I sent there are at least three items, coming out of the meeting series that we need to consider. The material from Mark David regarding the participating in the IEEE TV project appears to be of interest. Should we participate? If so who do we want to recommend?

The material from Jo Ann Grandal, dealing with the IEEE Public Visibility Program is, I think, self explanatory. Again we are asked for experts who can speak to the public on “hot topics”. I would really appreciate any recommendations that you have, and will continue the search for volunteers through the newsletter.

The material from Elya Joffe may be the most interesting to consider, and if you have not done so I strongly encourage you to review it. This may be an outstanding opportunity for us, or perhaps a treat to us. In any case, it warrants some discussion.

Finally, not in the back up material, we also were informed at TAB about another project being developed by the Future Directions Committee chaired by Bob Hebner (r.hebner@ieee.org). The concept they are suggesting is to develop “Custom Industry Seminars” that IEEE can market. The plan then would be to charge enough to cover cost, and generate something of a surplus for TAB and the participating societies. It would seem that we should be able to come up with an interesting suggestion as to how we might be able to generate one or more such seminars. At a minimum we really need to send our speaker list to the committee. This too seems to suggest some discussion.

This message has gotten entirely too long, so let me stop and see where go.

UNEDITED PRESIDENTS MESSAGE FOR NEXT ISSUE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

Membership Issues , Opportunities and the Society Future

Gerald L. Engel

2011 SSIT President

Friends and Colleagues

I have delayed writing this message until I returned from the IEEE Board Series held in June in Bellevue Washington. In this way, hopefully, I can keep you current on the current thinking within IEEE as it may apply to our Society.

As I mentioned in the previous President’s Column, there is a much improved approach within the IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB) in regards to its membership and serving its needs, and this certainly has continued at the recent meeting. At the same time, there are problems associated with the TAB structure that presents problems that have especially hard impacts when applied on the fringes of the distribution of sizes of memberships. It is difficult to handle problems of both the largest and the smallest of the member societies, and it remains somewhat uncertain as to how these problems will be handled, in an environment of one vote per society.

It appears that there will be a number of changes coming to IEEE membership procedures. The current proposal suggests that a Society Membership be bundled with all IEEE membership in the future. Thus every member, upon the implementation of this plan, will choose his or her choice of society membership. At the same time, each society will have to determine a basic membership structure that

will specify the benefits that will be provided for “basic members”, at a cost in the range of \$15US. There will then be other categories of membership that a society may propose that will be available at additional cost. IEEE members may join as many societies as they wish, but only the basic membership of one choice of society will be included in the basic membership package.

While the proposal appears to be successfully moving forward, there may be a variety of changes that will appear as the details are finally implemented. I will try to keep you up to date as this progresses. In the mean time, I would like to suggest that you may be able to help SSIT by encouraging those IEEE members that you know, who have not been affiliated with a society in the past, to consider joining SSIT as their selection. Increasing our membership would indeed go a long way to ensuring our future.

Within the TAB structure, there continues to be attention paid to addressing the problems, and ultimately sustainability of the various societies. In effect, TAB success is recognized by two things, technical success and financial success. Within the structure technical success is addressed by the periodic society review, while the TAB finance committee will work with societies who have continuing financial issues. Specifically it was suggested that under these circumstances the society should move towards becoming technical community (though the details of this were not presented). It was felt that the trigger for such a change should preferably come from the organizational unit that is having the problems, or alternatively by the TAB Management Committee who would request the restructuring. For either of these to happen the issues would have to be vetted through TAB and finally approved by TAB. During the process a three person group from TAB would oversee the organizational unit budget as well as activities. The objective would be to have a solution in six months, with a maximum of five years for the process to be completed.

The positives for the proposed action are that it would define a definite process to follow, it should improve the organizational unit, rather than penalize it, and it is community driven. On the negative side the pace of the process appears to be very slow, and the organizational unit development is driven by the existing community, which may be a significant part of the problem. The current plan for development is to more formally define this approach, socialize it through TAB, and submit the final proposal to TAB for approval in November 2011 for approval.

So, these are couple of the things going on within IEEE, and some ideas of how they might impact SSIT. I would really like to have your input on these, as well as other things that will impact, or potentially impact, the future of our Society.