Let the members vote!

As we observe our 25th anniversary, I would like to call your attention to one feature of our Society that is in dire need of overhaul: our elections process. In 1976 we're still electing officers as though we were a small technical committee in the old IRE or AIEE.

The details of this antiquated and complicated procedure are presented in our Bylaws (see the July 1975 Computer, p. 20 ff.), but its principal features—at least as it has worked out in practice—may be summarized as follows:

(1) Only Governing Board members can be nominated for officers.
(2) Only Governing Board members can vote for officers.
(3) The current Governing Board elects the new Governing Board.

To be sure, there are provisions for requesting a membership election of the Board and officers, but this requirement is a membership petition. It seems to me that rather than setting up roadblocks in the way of membership-wide elections, we ought to make such elections a matter of course.

This criticism seems to be all the more in order in view of our recent trend toward creating more officer positions. For example, at the last Governing Board meeting a motion was passed amending the current Bylaws to create the new positions of vice presidents for publications, conferences, and technical interest groups (groups of technical committees organized around a common theme). With the increased number of officer positions to fill, the Nominations Committee—already hard pressed to come up with candidates to serve in the officer openings we have now—will find their job even more difficult, and the result is bound to hurt the Society. In short, we need new blood.

Finally, of course, there is the argument that as a volunteer organization we ought to encourage members to participate in all Society activities—including running for office.

I would like to hear from any member who has an opinion on this. Please address your comments directly to me at the address indicated at the bottom of the roster at right.

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