From the president

Far-reaching constitutional and bylaws changes affecting the way we elect our Governing Board members and officers were approved by the board in Dallas last month. The constitutional changes must be voted on by the membership; accordingly, you will soon be receiving ballots.

The major proposed changes are to require election of both the Governing Board and officers by the membership. This represents a significant departure from current procedure, in which the board traditionally elects its own successors and officers must be elected by the board. As before, there will be provisions for Governing Board member nomination via petition from the membership at large. However, unlike past practice, officers may also be nominated by membership petition.

Other important changes were approved affecting the selection of Governing Board officer nominees. Except for the society’s secretary, officers no longer have to be chosen from the existing Governing Board. This not only opens the opportunity to others; it also provides a much-needed expansion of the officer candidate base.

These are the substantive changes; however, the entire constitution and bylaws have been streamlined and simplified. The full text of both documents appears on p. 108 ff. I encourage you to read them.

These changes strengthen our capability to serve the membership, and I urge your affirmative vote.

Credit for initiating these changes is due to past president Dick Simmons. Many others have contributed to the reworking of these two documents—in particular, David Jacobsohn, George Davida, and Rolland Arndt. Our thanks are due to them as well.

If ratified by the membership, the new election procedures will go into effect in 1978, when the 1979-80 elections are held. Until then, we will be electing our Governing Board under the old constitution and bylaws. In this regard I would like to call your attention to the slate of 1978-79 Governing Board nominees, whose biographies appear on pp. 106-107 of this issue. As stated on p. 108, nomination to the Governing Board may also be made by membership petition.

We welcome you to participate in our leadership selection.

Merlin G. Smith
President

From the chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee

As discussed by Merlin Smith in the adjoining column, considerable effort has gone into the reworking of our constitution and bylaws. The outcome of that effort, which appears on p. 108 ff. of this issue, is designed to accomplish several major things:

1. guarantee contested elections for all Governing Board positions,
2. guarantee the membership the right to petition for all elective positions,
3. expand the base of the Computer Society’s governing body by removing societal board tenure considerations for all officer positions other than the secretary,
4. stabilize and increase the size of the Governing Board, and
5. significantly change the amendment procedures for the bylaws to foster general membership feedback in the process.

To accomplish this, the constitution was totally rewritten as well as Article II of the bylaws.

In the constitution the most significant areas to consider are:

1. Article III, which redefines the Governing Board’s makeup and operation;
2. Article IV, which redefines the society’s officer structure; and
3. Article VI, Section 2, which establishes new procedures to allow membership review of and feedback on proposed bylaws changes prior to their passage.

Article II of the bylaws, which has been rewritten, contains the following significant changes:

1. Section 1 guarantees contested board elections;
2. Section 3 requires the candidates’ acknowledgement of their responsibilities prior to running; and
3. Sections 4 and 7 guarantee secret general membership ballot for both officer and board elections.

In addition, numerous cosmetic changes were made in the remainder of the bylaws.

The changes were vigorously initiated by the society’s former president Dick Simmons and nurtured by the current president Merlin Smith. The output is the work of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, supported by the noble contribution of many others. There were many compromises and much honing which led to the unanimous board approval of these new documents. I urge all Computer Society members to review them carefully.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee
George Davida
Harlow Freitag
Martin Graham
Mike Mulder
David Jacobsohn, Chairman