The year ahead—
with your participation

Data processing continues to be a dramatically increasing and pervasive force in human endeavor. To be relevant, the society’s forums and services must respond to these many new dimensions, opportunities, and problems. Our major tasks must be to provide the mechanisms and incentives to bring many additional members into positions of society leadership, and to foster a much more active membership at large. It is my strong personal goal to see the Computer Society recognized for the highest level of member activity among professional societies.

There are many changes in progress to stimulate this objective. You have ratified the new IEEE Computer Society Constitution. The vote was 6398 for and 166 against. The principal changes relate to the membership electing the society’s officers and Governing Board. You have a new challenge to help select your leadership, and we have a new and difficult task to present you with candidates, qualifications, issues, and positions to help make the selection process meaningful to you. The new constitution also increases the participation on the Governing Board, assuring 20 elected positions plus four officers.

In earlier actions, the Governing Board created the “Technical Interest Council” (TIC) concept. Initially, there will be two councils. These councils will assure a planned and aggressive approach, as opposed to an ad hoc posture, in developing our technical forums and services—and, importantly, the councils directly provide about 20 additional leadership positions, with many more opportunities for participation to evolve as a result.

The Governing Board, building upon the efforts of Steve Yau and Dick Simmons, has established COMPSAC, the Computer Society’s Software and Applications Conference, as an ongoing event for November in Chicago. This conference represents the consummation of the society’s full commitment to serve the software and applications interests of our members, and the full spectrum of computing disciplines.

A substantial increase in resources has been approved for Computer—more people, more pages, and a special tutorial series. In addition, a new tutorial series has been authorized for the Transactions on Computers to provide some added leadership appeal. New technical committees and broader support for other IEEE and IEEE-CS functions are planned. New publications have been proposed.

These endeavors can be achieved only with additional participation from the membership. We hope you can participate.

And yet, for many of us, active membership depends upon a different environment back at the shop, an environment where professional society participation is an accepted and expected part of every technical person’s professional life. This may be our most important objective. All too often, society participation is too far down the scale of values, or lost at lower management levels. And when certain segments, and select groups, including management, abandon society participation, it must be reflected eventually in poor leadership decisions, unbalanced and irrelevant programs, and loss of support in all quarters.

We believe that all management can be made to recognize the value of the society’s many technical forums—and when it does, it will respect your professional judgment in wanting to participate. With some persistence from enough of you, we believe we can have a real groundswell of participation. I hope each of you will accept this challenge.

Merlin Smith
President