From the IEEE vice-president for technical activities

I greatly appreciate this opportunity to address you, the members of the IEEE Computer Society. As IEEE vice-president for technical activities, I am responsible for the 32 groups, societies, and councils that are part of TAB, the Technical Activities Board. Each G/S/C has its own specialized area of activity in which it publishes one or more journals, sponsors conferences, and, in other ways, works toward increasing and disseminating knowledge. The Computer Society is by far the largest of the G/S/Cs, and thus I am extremely interested in its operations.

At the beginning of my term of office, I established 10 objectives for the IEEE's technical activities in 1980:

1. To maintain and enhance the high quality of the technical activities of the individual G/S/C's and to strive to make each the premier technical organization in the world for its field of specialization.
2. To devote more time at TAB meetings to the establishment of policy in IEEE technical activities areas and to the providing of a forum for the discussion of issues affecting individual G/S/C's.
3. To increase the utilization of division directors in implementing the interactions of TAB with other major IEEE entities, through both meetings of the division directors as a group (i.e., the TAB Operating Committee) and the utilization of individuals as liaison representatives to these entities.
4. To encourage individual G/S/C's to provide more services to their members, such as tutorials, short courses, survey papers, cumulative indexes, and lecturers for local meetings.
5. To obtain more applications-oriented papers for publication in the transactions of the G/S/C's.
6. To promote participation in IEEE technical activities by our international members, at a level consistent with their proportion of membership, through such mechanisms as conferences at international sites and international associate editors of transactions.
7. To increase the participation of G/S/C members in non-G/S/C activities through greater involvement in the appropriate committees of TAB and other IEEE entities; in particular, to increase the participation of G/S/C members in the professional activities of the institute.
8. To define and analyze alternative proposals for giving the technical divisions a clearer identity, possibly including the restructuring of some divisions, and to recommend appropriate action to the Board of Directors.
9. To examine alternative mechanisms for providing proportional representation of G/S/C members at the IEEE board level, possibly including the creation of a second divisional director position to represent the Computer Society, and to recommend appropriate action to the Board of Directors.
10. To allow G/S/C's to participate in the financial operations of the institute under the principle that the TAB is entitled to its fair share of IEEE general revenues, but with full recognition of the need for maintaining the financial viability of all parts of the institute.

Meeting these objectives will require a great deal of effort from all of us associated with TAB. Certainly objective 1, which I regard as the most important, depends almost entirely on the members of the G/S/C's. Objectives 4-7 also critically depend on the G/S/C's. I am very pleased with the outstanding achievements of the Computer Society, and I hope that I can count on your support in continuing its activities at the highest level.

I have been able to organize TAB meetings so as to make some progress on objectives 2 and 3. First, I appointed liaison representatives to the other major IEEE boards; these representatives, who are in almost all cases also division directors, will serve as the primary interface between TAB and these boards. The representatives are:

Lawrence K. Anderson—Educational Activities Board
Thelma Estrin—Publications Board
F.A. Furfari—Regional Activities Board

Cont'd on overleaf
Edward J. Doyle—United States
Activities Board and USAB
Operating Committee
Jose Cruz—United States Activities
Board
Dick B. Simmons—United States
Activities Board
Jim Owens—Standards Board
Barry Oakes—Awards Board

Second, I established TAB OpCom, an
operating committee consisting pri-
arily of the division directors, as a
mechanism for prescreening and pre-
paring the presentation of issues
brought to TAB from other boards.
Finally, I set aside a substantial block
of time in TAB meetings for discus-
sion of the concerns of the individual
G/S/C’s; at our first TAB meeting,
many good suggestions were made by
the individual G/S/C presidents, and I
hope that all G/S/C’s can benefit from
sharing these ideas. This approach
seems to work well for everyone at
TAB meetings; I hope to continue it in
the future.

The next TAB meeting is July 18, in
Minneapolis, in conjunction with the
IEEE Summer Power Meeting. This
will give TAB OpCom the opportu-
nity to prepare the meeting so that it
can focus on G/S/C concerns. An added
benefit is that a TAB meeting will be
scheduled with a major G/S/C con-
fERENCE; in the future, I hope to
distribute a TAB or TAB OpCom meet-
ing in conjunction with a major con-
fERENCE of the Computer Society.

Some progress has also been made
in the evaluation of the current divi-
sion structure (objectives 8 and 9). An
ad hoc committee chaired by Dick
Simmons, director of Division 5
(representing the Computer Society),
will study this issue. The committee’s
report will be presented at the Decem-
ber TAB OpCom and TAB meetings.
If you have suggestions on this sub-
ject, please pass them on to Dick at the
Data Processing Center, Texas A & M
University, College Station, TX
77843.

I am always anxious to hear from
you about any issues you feel TAB or
TAB OpCom should consider. Please
contact me at Systems Control, Inc.,
1801 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, CA
94304, with any specific suggestions
or comments. I look forward to work-
 ing with you this year.

Robert E. Larson
IEEE Vice-President,
Technical Activities

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Queues liberated!

Editor:

With respect to your April 1980
cover, “Sky and Water I,” your ar-
ticle on New Applications (p. 91) is
startling. Particularly if one looks at
“Liberation” by Escher.

It was of interest to me to note the
difference in wing pattern between
birds actually in flight and as drawn.
Note also that the wings are in one of
two positions (binary states ap-
propriate for Computer) with the ac-
tual energy supply state being ap-
parently a transition state.

I suppose one could dwell on the
various queues involved as well; but
that might be pushing things a little
far.

W. Dean Spencer

In “Liberation,” as the title sug-
gests, Escher’s birds are freed from
formal flight. We forwarded
Spencer’s note—with copies of
“Liberation”—to some of our April
contributors, who were inspired to
additional flights of fancy.

From Guest Editor John Spragins:

Staff editors at Computer have ad-
mitted that their use of similar queues
on the cover and within the New Ap-
lications section was not purely coinci-
dental. They have not, however, claimed
any credit for the fact that my copy of
the issue arrived on the very day that
Douglas Hofstadter’s book, Godel,
Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid
(see “About the Cover,” April Compu-
ter, p. 7), was announced as the win-
ner of the Pulitzer prize for nonfiction.
That seems to have been simply good
luck.

From Author Arnold Allen, whose note
was accompanied by a recent IBM ad
headlined “Dreamers, Heretics,
Gadflies, Maverick, and Geniuses”:
The picture on page 91 reminds me of
the notion of the “wild duck,” the un-
conventional and independent thinker
institutionalized by IBM in the form of
the IBM Fellow . . .
The IBM ad speaks of providing
Fellows with “freedom from the
usual limits of corporate approval” . . .
and so we recur to “Liberation,”
as IBM frees its wild ducks from
formal flight.

—Ed.

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