IEEE President-Elect Candidates Address Computer Society Concerns

The IEEE Computer Society has established a reputation for excellence within the fields of computing. As a component of the IEEE, the Computer Society's activities parallel those of 37 other IEEE societies and councils serving the computing and engineering disciplines. As the largest IEEE society contingent, the Computer Society has 85,000 members, approximately 60 percent of whom are full IEEE members.

Recognizing the impact of the IEEE leadership over the Computer Society and in turn the power of Computer Society members’ votes to influence the selection of the IEEE leadership, we posed questions to this year’s IEEE president-elect candidates. Because this election determines who will serve as president-elect in 2011, president in 2012, and past president in 2013—vital positions within the IEEE’s governing body—our members must cast informed votes.

Our volunteer leaders have identified the following questions as essential to the Computer Society, the IEEE, and the Computer Society’s relationship with the IEEE. The first response to each question states the Computer Society’s position. These positions synthesize the views of our most senior leadership: the Society’s current, past, and incoming presidents. We present these questions and answers (limited to 150 words each) to help you make your decision in the IEEE annual election. Only ballots received by noon, Central Time, on 1 October 2010 will be counted.

We also remind and encourage you to cast your vote for Computer Society leaders by noon Eastern Time, 4 October 2010 in our Society election.

—Sorel Reisman, IEEE Computer Society president-elect

GORDON W. DAY

Gordon Day spent most of his career in research and management at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, where he founded and led the NIST Optoelectronics Division. His personal research ranged from fundamental optical measurements to the development of standards for optical fiber and new concepts in instrumentation. More recently, he served as science advisor to US Senator Jay Rockefeller and director of government relations for the Optoelectronics Industry Development Association. He has been a professor adjoint at the University of Colorado and a visiting fellow at the University of Southampton (UK), and has served on many industry, government, and academic advisory groups. He is a past president of the IEEE Photonics Society and of IEEE-USA, and is a fellow of IEEE, AAAS, the Optical Society of America, and the Institute of Physics (UK). He received a BS, a MS, and a PhD in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois.

JOE LILLIE

Joe Lillie received a BS in electrical engineering and an MS in telecommunications from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. He has 36-years experience in telecommunications management. Lillie was employed by BellSouth from 1973 to 2002, retiring as a member of the Louisiana BellSouth State Staff. In 2003, Lillie joined NorthStar Communications Group, where he served as the Director of Corporate Quality. In September 2005, Lillie returned to BellSouth, working on Hurricane Katrina restoration. Lillie continues to provide engineering support to AT&T.

During his professional career, Lillie has attended numerous training sessions on telephony, management, leadership contract administration, and quality management. Lillie and his wife, Debbie, have been married for 37 years. They have two children and five grandchildren.
### QUESTION 1:

**What is the highest priority that you have for the Computer Society in your presidential year, and how do you intend to help us accomplish it?**

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<td>The success of the Computer Society should be a high priority for all IEEE leaders. As a former president of the IEEE Photonics Society, I understand the difficulties of providing publications, conferences, and other services in a competitive and budget-limited environment. Over the past few years, the Computer Society has made significant progress in improving its business model, and I will work to help it continue on its current path of development.</td>
<td>I am in no position to set priorities for the Computer Society; this is a task for your society. Once the Computer Society identifies its highest priority, I will fully support this priority just as I have done in the past. An example is the membership initiative project which was proposed by the Computer Society. I fully supported this initiative as a member of the IEEE Finance Committee and the IEEE Board of Directors. So, my highest priority will be to listen to your issues, understand these issues, and work hard in concert with the Computer Society to address these issues.</td>
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### QUESTION 2:

**The IEEE Board of Directors may be restructured. What do you think of the proposed changes, and how will restructuring help the Computer Society better serve its large community of professionals?**

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<td>I believe that IEEE members want their leaders to focus on improving the benefits of membership and constraining costs, rather than on governance. There are opportunities for change that could help the Board function better, but I am concerned about the disruption of a major reorganization. As president, I would focus the Board’s attention more on policy and strategic decisions and allow the operating units to manage their own activities. The Computer Society has asked that any reorganization be pursued “…with great caution, deliberation, in measured steps, and with well-defined benefits.” I agree and note that the Board’s most recent actions are consistent with that view.</td>
<td>Recent attempts to change the composition of the IEEE Board of Directors have been unsuccessful. Changes of this type are difficult, given the process required to implement the change. I would suggest that the role of the IEEE Board of Directors must be clarified. The Board should be focused on policy and strategic issues and let the organizational units handle the implementation and operational issues. As your president, I will work to create a strategic agenda for the IEEE Board that focuses on what IEEE should be doing worldwide and then let the organizational units do their job in implementing this strategy. If we take this approach, we can be a better organization and better serve the worldwide technical community, including the Computer Society and all members.</td>
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### QUESTION 3

**Day**

I have promised to work to improve the cost/benefit ratio of membership across all of IEEE. That includes society as well as IEEE membership. The example cited is an apportioned share of the direct cost of services provided to the Society by IEEE. I will work with volunteers and staff to identify opportunities to reduce both direct and indirect costs, while at the same time working to increase the benefits of IEEE and society membership.

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**Lillie**

The cost charged to the Computer Society (and all other IEEE societies and membership entities) is a per-transaction cost determined by dividing the total cost to support members by the total number of transactions. This allocation process, like many IEEE cost-allocation algorithms, has been in use for many years. Yes, I am willing to address this cost allocation. The first step is to evaluate the overall cost, identify ways to reduce the cost, and implement a cost-reduction plan. We should also review the algorithm to ensure that the correct allocation is used. Our members deserve the best possible service at the lowest possible cost, and if we work together this can be accomplished.

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**COMPUTER SOCIETY POSITION**

3 We believe that problem stems from high overhead costs that are distributed and passed back to the societies, with equivocal regard for the correctness of the assessments. There is a reasonable contribution the Computer Society should make to support the IEEE in both its mission and its day-to-day operations. However, there appear to be insufficient controls in place with respect to these growing cost factors, thus impacting the ability of the Computer Society and other IEEE operating units to serve their professional communities. Most telling is the limitation such fees put on our ability to hold down membership costs and attract a much broader membership base.

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**Currently, the IEEE imposes a very high $24 direct expense on each society member, presumably in part to cover various IEEE expenses. Do you plan to address this assessment and situation and, if not, why not?**

- **Day**
- **Lillie**

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**QUESTION 3**

**COMPUTER SOCIETY POSITION**
IEEE's IT infrastructure must support the disparate needs of members, volunteers, customers, staff, and the general public. The difficulties are significant, but success is essential to our future. That success will come primarily through the efforts of our dedicated staff, and I am pleased that our executive director has accepted full responsibility for managing those efforts. I will continue to be an advocate for providing the necessary resources and ensuring vigorous accountability. Greater use of technology for conducting meetings, broadcasting events, and distributing archived resources would enable more members to participate in IEEE activities, reduce travel costs, and increase our global integration. I will work to accelerate IEEE efforts in these areas.

As the largest technical professional society in the world, our members deserve better IT support than they have received in the recent past. The new CTO has overall responsibility for IT functions, and the IT team must clearly understand the expectations of all of our stakeholders (members, volunteers, and customers). Using these expectations and available technology and resources, we must have a world-class operation that is the model for technology organizations. From a member and volunteer perspective, the most important IT component is the user interface. Therefore, if I were to launch a new IT effort to support membership or volunteers, what would that be?
QUESTION 5

Introduction of new society publications in the IEEE is a lengthy, arduous, and burdensome process. For example, the minimum time from concept to delivery of the first issue of a new publication, whether in print or online, is about 18 months. What will you do to make the approval process more efficient?

COMPUTER SOCIETY POSITION

The Computer Society would like to see a process that provides more support for dealing with scope issues related to new publication proposals, allows nascent editorial boards to develop their community, and demonstrates reader interest in their proposals through online publications. Currently, the process for dealing with conflicting publication scopes can easily add 6-12 months to the development of a new periodical. It is purely adversarial, with minimal defined processes for mediating disagreements. Simplified procedures are required to allow all communities to identify potential conflicts and resolve them quickly. It is essential that Publications Services and the Products Board begin to formulate and test new “outside-the-box” practices to make the process of introducing new publications more efficient. The Computer Society is more than willing to offer ideas in this regard.

Day

I am committed to maintaining the quality of IEEE publications, and to keeping them at the forefront of rapidly advancing technologies. I have been an editor and have served on committees and boards that oversee some of IEEE’s most respected and successful publications. The successful launch of a new publication requires careful planning and decisions, creation of an effective editorial structure, solicitation and review of manuscripts, and advertising to potential customers, among other activities. Minimizing the time between conception and first issue is important in a competitive environment, but I think it is difficult to launch a high-quality publication in fewer than 18 months.

Lillie

The current timeline for this process is unacceptable. If we are to remain relevant and competitive, we must do a better job of providing timely new publications. My management experience has taught me that we must continuously review processes, identify areas for improvement, utilize feedback, and implement improvement plans. If we are not meeting the expectations of the user community, including the authors, volunteers, and readers, then we risk losing our base of support. We are in a competitive field and must not allow the competition to manage this process better than we do. As your president, I will insist that the IEEE do a better job with this and other processes. We are the largest technical professional society in the world, but we must continuously improve to maintain this elite status.