

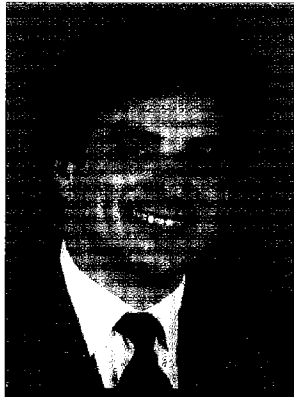
COMSOC EMBRACES THE GLOBE

The last three months have been fruitful for ComSoc in the area of society relations. This seemingly old area of ComSoc activities has been transformed over the past two years. In January 1998 ComSoc introduced the position of Vice President, Society Relations, replacing the position of Vice President, International Affairs. This change recognized the evolution of ComSoc into a truly international organization. Society relations activities are managed by the Society Relations Council chaired by the area Vice President. The first Society Vice President responsible for society relations was Tetsuya Miki of the University of Electro-Communications, Japan. Presently, this position is held by Alex Gelman, a chief scientist with Panasonic Research Laboratories, Princeton, New Jersey.

Two classes of society partners have been established, namely related societies and sister societies. Related societies are peer societies within IEEE as well as those, usually with an international flavor, either dedicated to fields complimentary to ComSoc's or addressing topics of communications with a somewhat different emphasis than ComSoc does. Examples of such societies are the Internet Society (ISOC), the Association of Computer Manufacturers (ACM), and the Optical Society of America (OSA). Sister societies are entities with a predominantly national or regional scope that otherwise have a mission very similar to that pursued by ComSoc. Entering into agreements with local societies was perceived to be of utmost importance when it was decided that ComSoc should significantly increase its activities outside North America. It was deemed important that ComSoc be perceived by those organizations as an important partner and not as a competitor. This division into two categories is reflected in the administrative structure of the Society Relations area, which consists of directorates. One of them deals with related societies and is headed by Nim Cheung, a Vice President at Telcordia Technologies. The other, covering the area of sister societies, is under the leadership of Tomonori Aoyama, a professor at the University of Tokyo.

The official ComSoc mission was stated in last month's Message. However, restating it using the jargon of our field, it probably could be said that the society mission is to serve communications professionals globally through the packaging of information and operations, and maintenance of human networks of those professionals. Partnerships with related and sister societies provide the vehicle for internetworking among human and information "subnets". It opens new markets for Communication Society products such as publications and technical meetings, broadens the horizon for ComSoc members, and increases the virtual mass of the engineering community.

Although the area of society relations was established some-



Roberto de Marca

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Alex Gelman

what recently, actions are already underway. As of now ComSoc has formal agreements in place with 12 sister societies globally and partnerships with several IEEE and other related societies to promote very successful initiatives. Among them are the three-way joint venture between ComSoc, OSA, and IEEE LEOS) steering the huge conference on optical communications known as OFC. Other notable partnerships in the area of conferences are INFOCOM and MILCOM. In October 1999 ComSoc and the Russian Popov Society (RPS) co-sponsored a workshop on Internet technologies and services, Moscow Internet '99. Close to 100 participants from the United States, Russia, and Europe presented papers and attended the workshop. During the workshop a partnership agreement between ComSoc and RPS was extended for two years. Last May, a group of IEEE and ComSoc officers visited Russia and presented an extremely distinguished Russian scientist, Academician Kotelnikov, with the Alexander Graham Bell Medal, and also presented the IEEE Millennium Medal to the Chair of the Russian Popov Society, Yuri Gulyaev. Our own past president Steve Weinstein was recognized and became an honorary member of RPS. While in Moscow both of us visited Ross Telecom Leasing and got familiarized with the operation of this company run by new young Russian entrepreneurs.

Examples of publication partnerships also exist and have been very encouraging. The more recent one is the sponsorship of *IEEE Transactions on Multimedia* published in collaboration with three other IEEE societies: Circuits and Systems, Signal Processing, and Computer. Other established success stories are *IEEE Multimedia Magazine* and *IEEE Transactions on Networks* (a partnership of ACM and IEEE Computer Society). There are also successes in relationships with sister societies. A good example is the journal technically cosponsored by ComSoc and published by KICS, the Korean sister society, titled the *Journal on Communications and Networks* (JCN). Cooperation with sister societies has also produced direct benefits to our members, such as the ability to subscribe to *IEICE Transactions on Communications* and *European Transactions on Telecommunications* (co-sponsored by AEI, Italy) at substantially reduced prices.

The Internet revolution brought a lot of changes to the world economy. These changes, which have happened and continue to happen at an extremely fast pace, pose difficult challenges for ComSoc. It appears that teaming up with other societies might be an appropriate tactic to overcome these strategic challenges. As an example, home networking has become an important communications domain, and research and engineering communities as well as standards bodies are presently starting the

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

development of various specifications for home gateways and home network management. ComSoc's Technical Activities Council has just launched an important initiative designed to stimulate technical activities in the area of home networking. The Society Relations Council is determined to bring relevant partnerships into this effort. An important one appears to be The IEEE Consumer Electronics Society, which has already been approached.

The technical depth and long-term value of ComSoc's intellectual products are recognized by all, including those active in the Internet community. Our publications and conferences are predominantly archival and relate to precompetitive research. On the other hand, ISOC, which among other activities supports the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), operates with much shorter time-to-market time constants, and cooperation with them is felt to be beneficial to ComSoc and its members. Such a joint venture could produce a chance to take part in an exciting and dynamic *modus operandi*: producing virtually hot-plugable Internet standards.

Over the past few months ComSoc and ISOC officers met to discuss common points of interest and potential partnership scenarios. On 19-20 July a meeting and a working breakfast took place at the INET 2000 conference in Yokohama, Japan. The first joint venture with ISOC will be the IPv6 Workshop in conjunction with Globecom 2000 in San Francisco, California. Cross-promotions of *IEEE Communications Magazine* and ISOC's *OnTheInternet Magazine* are being planned. Under consideration are collaborative efforts in the area of Internet promotion and assistance in Internet education in the developing nations.

As the G8 nations were holding their summit in Okinawa, a bit further north, in Yokohama, ComSoc was hosting the first part of a Sister Society summit with the participation of KICS of Korea and the Institute of Electrical, Information, and Communications Engineers Communications Society (IEICE-CS) of

Japan. The second part of the Summit took place in Singapore on 24-25 July and included, in addition to ComSoc, IETE (India), CIEE (ROC), and REV (Vietnam). The main objective of the summit was to jointly discuss further possibilities for collaboration among the Societies. In September this series of encounters will continue with meetings between ComSoc and SEE (of France) and the Italian society (AIE).

At the Yokohama Summit, agreements were extended between ComSoc and IEICE-CS, and an agreement was signed between KICS and IEICE-CS. At the Singapore Summit the agreement between IETE and ComSoc was extended for another two years. More details about these meetings will be covered in the October issue of this magazine. During the same trip the IEEE Millenium Medal was presented to the President and CEO of NTT DoCoMo, Dr. Keiji Tachikawa. Dr. Tachikawa is a member of ComSoc's recently created President's Industry Advisory Board. Both the ComSoc Tokyo Chapter Chair and the President of IEICE-CS were present at the ceremony in Tokyo. Later, while strolling through Yokohama, we witnessed NTT DoCoMo service in action: thousands of young people buying terminals in the streets and crowds of people on the phone, transmitting both voice and data at any given time; **ALL GETTING CONNECTIONS!**

The transnational character of ComSoc is strongly shown by our fast growing global membership as well as new partnerships applied to our products: publications, technical meetings, educational activities, and standards. The list of members, partners, and friends grows daily. Joint ventures with related and sister societies in the works will add to known success stories. There are very few locations on our planet where there are no ComSoc members or ComSoc partners. Our conferences rotate between the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Our membership is a truly global community, and our officers constitute a truly international team. New faces change the face of the society as ComSoc embraces the Globe.