

PGEC News

To All PGEC Chapter Officers and Committee Chairmen

The PGEC News section of the TRANSACTIONS is open to your announcements and reports of activities. Deadline is the first of the month, two months ahead of the date of issue. Send all items to the Editor.

THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

St. Paul, Minn., March 15, 1962

Technical Activities Committees

This is written two weeks before the PGEC AdCom meeting in New York at which we expect to adopt a plan for Technical Activities Committees (TAC's). The officially adopted version of the plan will be described in the next issue of the TRANSACTIONS. Objectives have been discussed previously in these columns. In summary, a mechanism is proposed for establishing TAC's in special interest topical areas which lie within the scope of PGEC. The purpose of a TAC is to provide the leadership in organizing technical activities in its specialty area. Some examples of such activities were listed in the December, 1961, TRANSACTIONS, page 845. The procedures under which TAC's form and operate (as well as merge and dissolve) will be kept simple. The TAC's will be encouraged to concentrate on the substance, and not on the organizational trappings, of their work. Upon adoption of the plan by the AdCom, pilot run TAC's will immediately be launched in a few specialties. Two likely candidates are 1) analog and hybrid computing, and 2) logic and switching theory. The latter may be organized in parallel with a corresponding AIEE subcommittee to operate, in effect, as a joint TAC. I am confident that the TAC plan will develop into a successful, practical instrument.

Instructions for organizing a TAC will be outlined in the published plan. In the meantime, if you wish to participate in the organization of a new TAC, please drop me or one of the incoming officers a note.

IRE-AIEE Merger

Progress reports on the proposed merger, as well as letters pro and con, have appeared in the PROCEEDINGS OF THE IRE and in other electronic publications. Panel discussions have been held at national meetings of both Institutes, and at meetings of many of the local sections. You received a bright red pamphlet on this subject as a supplement to the March PROCEEDINGS. A little later this year, the matter will be ready for a vote by the entire membership of both societies. Every IRE member should make it his business to become thoroughly familiar with the merger plan, the problems, and the issues.

As observed in a previous letter that the combined computer wings of the two Institutes contain the ingredients for a strong, effective computer engineering organization. Their respective computer activities complement each other particularly well. Elimination of the

existing duplication in our various technical activities would strengthen our ability to carry out objectives and to provide a full program of service to the membership.

In many matters beyond our immediate technical area, however, the implications of consolidation are less clear. Please study the issues as thoroughly and carefully as possible in arriving at your position. Then, when the time comes, be sure to vote. If you fail to exercise your vote, you are abdicating an important responsibility to yourself and to your profession. The proposed merger is a major move, and a rather permanent one. Each of us must help IRE make the right decision.

PGEC Spaceborne Conference

The forthcoming PGEC national symposium is now officially known as "Spaceborne Computer Engineering Conference." As you know, the conference will be held at the Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, Calif., October 30-31. Bill Gunning, Conference Chairman, has his organizational machinery all put together and running. The Program Committee is headed by Dr. Robert A. Kudlich. Detailed information on submitting papers appears elsewhere in this issue.

1963 SJCC

The 1963 Spring Joint Computer Conference will be held at Detroit. This is the first Joint Computer Conference to be staged away from the coasts. Dr. E. C. Johnson of Bendix Research Laboratories has been appointed Conference Chairman, as reported elsewhere in this issue. Cal is completing his tour of duty on the PGEC Administrative Committee, and as Chairman of the PGEC Conferences Committee.

Lend a Shoulder

This is my final contribution to this column as PGEC Chairman. The job has been a mixture of satisfaction, frustration, and education. I think we have made some measurable progress, but not nearly enough. Every volunteer organization seems to have a viscosity coefficient which limits the work which can be accomplished per unit time. For this reason, there is room for qualified workers who can make available their time, energy, and experience. Please don't be shy about volunteering your services to your PGEC officers, both Chapter and National. They will be delighted to hear from you.

ARNOLD A. COHEN
Chairman, PGEC

CHAIRMAN NAMED FOR SPRING JOINT COMPUTER CONFERENCE

Dr. E. Calvin Johnson, head of Bendix Research Laboratories Computer Development Department, has been named chairman of the 1963 Spring Joint Computer Conference of AFIPS, the Americans Federation of Information Processing Societies, to be held in Detroit. Dr. Johnson brings strong leadership to the conference, based on an extremely active career in professional and community activities.



Dr. Johnson is a member of all three of the member societies of AFIPS and he organized the Detroit chapter of the IRE Professional Group on Electronic Computers. He has been serving on the national Administrative Committee of the PGEC. He received the B.S. degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he was the top graduate, and the M.S. and ScD. degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Among his many awards and honors is selection as Georgia Tech's outstanding young alumnus of the year, for 1961. Since leaving M.I.T., he has published or presented 24 technical papers.

In 1951, Dr. Johnson joined the Research Laboratories Division of Bendix Corporation where he has participated in a number of study and development programs involving special purpose analog and digital computers. He headed the group that developed the cam milling machine and control system that is now the basis of Bendix activity in the numerical tool control field.

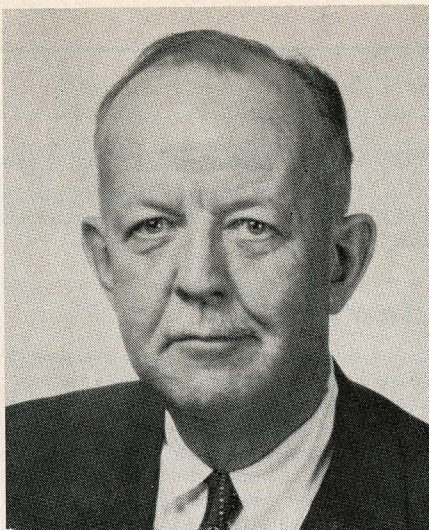
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OBITUARY

Dr. Howard T. Engstrom (SM'53-F'59), Vice President, Remington Rand Division of Sperry Rand Corporation, died on March 8, 1962, after an illness of several months. Dr. Engstrom attained distinction in the academic world, in military and Government service, and as a pioneer in the computer industry.

Dr. Engstrom was born in Boston, Mass., on April 23, 1902. He received the B.Chem.E. degree from Northeastern University in 1922, the M.S. degree from the University of Maine in 1925, and the Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale University in 1929. He conducted post-doctoral research in the field of abstract algebra as a National Research Fellow at the California Institute of Technology in 1930 and at Goettingen University in 1931.

Before entering graduate study in 1923, he spent a year on the technical staff of Western Union. He was an Instructor in Mathematics at the University of Maine and at Trinity College, and then joined the Yale faculty in 1926. He left his Associate Professorship at Yale in 1941 to accept a commission in the U. S. Navy. While in service, he directed significant military work in applied mathematics. He left active service in 1945 as a Captain in the Naval Reserve. In recognition of his contributions he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Order of the British Empire, the Naval Reserve Medal, and a Presidential Unit Citation.



Dr. Engstrom was one of the group which founded Engineering Research Associates, Inc., in 1946 at St. Paul, Minn. As Vice President, he headed planning and research operations, including the development of data processing systems which were among the first in the electron computer industry. When ERA was acquired by Remington Rand in 1952, he became Vice President of that firm.

In 1956, he left Remington Rand (by then a Division of Sperry Rand) to serve for the next two years as Deputy Director of the National Security Agency. Upon completion of service, he was honored with the Distinguished Civilian Service Award and the National Security Agency Medal. He was cited by Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy for "exceptional meritorious civilian service." For his part in directing the Agency's research program, the citation read: "At great personal sacrifice he brought outstanding scientific competence, administrative talent and rare judgment to bear on complex issues."

He returned to Sperry Rand in 1958 as Vice President. In this capacity, he was responsible for planning and marketing of scientific and military systems. He also represented Sperry Rand in relations with the international scientific community.

In 1959, the IRE conferred upon Dr. Engstrom the grade of Fellow, "for contributions in the development and utilization of high-speed computers." He was also a member of the Mathematical Association of America, the American Mathematical Society, the American Chemical Society, and the Association for Computing Machinery.

Dr. Engstrom is survived by his widow, the former Karin Ekblum; two daughters, Mrs. William Agosta and Anna, and a son Morton. His loss will be keenly felt by his many friends and associates, and by the scientific community throughout the world.