

# IMPACT

THE NEWSLETTER OF IEEE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

FEB. 1977

## A MESSAGE FROM THE V.P. FOR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

The December 1976 issue of SPECTRUM reports some of USAB's accomplishments through 1976. The 1977 USAB Program Plan outlines a program of action that will yield even more visible benefits to IEEE members.

Supported by a small professional staff in Washington, DC., the 1977 USAB will provide overall policy guidance and direction to the professional activities program. My plans include:

- Assigning a USAB member as Chairman of each of the major 1977 program goals.
- Holding open USAB meetings in different cities throughout the country to increase the direct interface between the USAB and members of IEEE.
- Distributing summaries of USAB meetings to all PAC's and Section Chairmen.
- Soliciting continuous inputs to the 1977 USAB program plan from an increasing number of Institute members.

For the USAB to be truly responsive to the needs and interests of our members, however, we need a greater commitment and involvement on the part of each and every member. During 1977 I would like to see a tenfold increase in the number of members active in professional activities.

I would also hope for an increasing awareness that the problems affecting some engineers should be the concern of all IEEE members if we are to improve the economic benefits for our members, improve the career conditions and opportunities for engineers, and most importantly enhance the image and status of the engineering profession.

In particular, the problem of salary-busting of engineers working on Service Contracts may affect only a small percentage of our members, but to the extent that any of our members are discriminated against the status and image of the entire profession suffers. As one of our members from N.J. wrote in a recent letter on this subject, "...although I have no personal ax to grind in this particular issue (Service Contract Act), I admire what you are doing and encourage you to continue..." He has already written to two of his N.J. Representatives and both U.S. Senators and urged their support for an amendment to the Service Contract Act to extend its protection against salary-busting to professional employees. We need more of this kind of support from an

increasing number of our members if Professional Activities are to serve the needs of our profession.

My hopes for 1977:

- A tenfold increase in the number of members actively participating in Professional Activities.
- The development of a one-on-one relationship between at least one IEEE member with each and every Congressman and Representative. If an average of less than eleven members per state made it his or her business to get to know *just one* Congressman or Representative, we could achieve this goal.
- The passage of an amendment to the Service Contract Act that will bring us the same protection from salary busting that both blue and white collar workers now enjoy.

I urge all of you who are interested in working on Professional Activities in your Section, Group or Society or on a USAB Committee or Task Force to write me, c/o The Washington, D.C. Office, 2029 K. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Let me know what issues concern you, how you can contribute to meeting the Goals of the 1977 USAB Program Plan (See December 1976 SPECTRUM article on USAB) and how we can reach you. I will have one of our USAB Staff Members contact you. We would like to have you involved!

John J. Guarrera, V.P.  
Professional Activities  
and Chairman of USAB

## EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE ?

The IEEE employment assistance programs, with all their good intentions, are counterproductive and will not contribute to solving the problems afflicting engineers, because the programs dilute our efforts and neither attack or even mention the underlying source of our dilemma. As we all should know, the engineering quasi-profession disgracefully suffers from an over-supply, glut and uncontrolled proliferation of engineers. This is the problem that should be addressed as opposed to teaching engineers resume writing and interview taking.

An all out effort should be made to control entrants into the field. As a start, we should work towards state and federal engineering registration and licensing. Meaningful



accreditation of engineering curriculums should also be undertaken. This should be done in a manner that will emphasize the welfare of the engineers and the profession and not only the colleges and industry.

These endeavors will strengthen the Institute and the engineering profession. A strong and healthy engineering profession will also help others as well as those who work as employees. The spin-off of a healthy and stabilized engineering profession will help the better colleges, the country and companies as well as the engineers.

Therefore, I suggest that the IEEE not engage in VEST Style Operation, Employment Assistance Programs, EE Only Referral Service, Career Counseling and Psychological Counseling. A concerted effort should be placed on a direct solution to the engineer over-supply problem that has faced us for decades and is still with us.

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## CONFERENCE BOARD REPORT

### CAUGHT OFF BASE

By Robert A. Rivers

The November issue of *PE*, the periodical of the National Society of Professional Engineers, carried an excerpt of a report of the Conference Board written by Eileen B. Hoffman. The Conference Board claims to be an independent, non-profit business research organization. The report concerns itself with the possible unionization of Professional Societies. The report delineates 12 steps in the path to unionization and relates the present state of the professional societies to that scale of 12. The implication is that Professional Societies are three-quarters of the way toward becoming unions. A course of action is prescribed to counter the full development of Professional Societies.

It is my purpose to destroy the "Bogey-Man" of unionization attached to the development of a profession from what were technical specialties. We must ask the question, "What are the characteristics of a profession?" They are: Access to and responsibility for the maintenance and development of a specialized body of knowledge not readily available to the general public, peer group control over the optimum conditions for delivery of the benefits of that knowledge to the public, and peer group rights and responsibility to expel members for actions not conforming to the group norms for responsible behavior. In contrast, one should ask the question, "What are the characteristics of a unionized group of people?" They are: Group control over the optimum benefits for the delivery of services to the employer, and the right to expel members not conforming to the group goal of optimizing benefits.

The union has one thing in common with a Professional Society, the right to expel members for behavior not consistent with the goals of the group, such as strike breaking. This, however, is not only common with Professional Societies, but common with all groups of people,

country clubs, yacht clubs, political parties, and others.

In contrast to the Professional Society, the union has no interest in or responsibility for the body of knowledge required to deliver the service. A question to a union member or official about responsibility for the body of knowledge, its development or promulgation would normally draw a "Does not Compute" response.

Another important area of difference is in the peer group control over the optimum conditions of delivery of the benefits of the body of knowledge to the public. The union member generally does not recognize the public interest, nor the optimum conditions for delivery of the services. The union member optimization is for benefits with concentration on contractual control over wages, working hours, supervisory control, firing procedures, non-working benefits, and fringe benefits.

Summarizing then, unions as groups of people have something in common with professionals as groups, but with all other groups of people as well, that of group norms of behavior. Unions have nothing in common with professionals with regard to their body of knowledge. The union member has no responsibility while the professional has a responsibility for its responsible use, contributions to it, and its promulgation to the next generation of users. Unions have nothing in common with professionals in regard to control of the conditions of delivery. The union optimizes the benefit regardless of the value to society and frequently forces the use of people when completely unnecessary. The professional society will tend to optimize conditions to permit the continued availability of quality services to the public with compensation and security only associated factors. Unions thus have little in common with Professional Societies.

Another approach to comparing unions and Professional Societies is to use the author's own 12 point comparison and to perhaps add one that the author did not include, that of the attention to technical information (point 0). The concentration on these factors by the three types of organizations under discussion is depicted in the accompanying table. It must be noted that the simplification of the categories of activity by Hoffman, particularly in numbers 9 through 12, has been done in such a way as to enhance her case.

It is obvious from the table that the union has more points in common with the Technical Society than it does with the Professional Society. What is apparent is that the Professional Society occupies the space not occupied by the union. The Professional Society directs itself toward solutions of the problem without the use of collective bargaining. It would be absurd to go through the process of creating a profession in order to arrive at unionization. Unionization can be achieved almost immediately simply by declaring an organizing drive of an employing unit, and getting sufficient authorizations to have a representation election held. None of the Professional Society steps are needed or are even useful in unionization. In fact, a true Technical Society would, in the face of extended adverse career conditions, probably opt for the direct and immediate union solution rather than spend the time and effort involved in developing a professional solution. Unionization is a "Bogey-Man" that is not the result of effective professionalization, but will be



the result of thwarting the desires of members to professionalize. The article even went so far as to list six tactics that might be used to discourage professional activity. Examples of these tactics include tactic #5, increase management participation in professional societies, and attach more importance to society activities, and tactic #6, support the more moderate societies while encouraging societies to adhere to their more traditional role of developing further technical excellence. Obviously, the professional must be wary of those misguided individuals and organizations that would push him toward unionization, and must continue to pursue vigorously professional solutions to his problems.

**TABLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

	Tech Soc.	Prof. Soc.	Union
0. Concentrates on Technical Interests.	Yes	Yes	No
1. Concentrates on Professional Interests	No	Yes	No
2. Assumes Responsibility for Training	No	Yes	No
3. Controls Entry Qualifications	No	Yes	No
4. Limits Supply through Public Control	No	Yes	No
5. Adopts a Code of Ethics	No	Yes	No
6. Publicizes the Profession	No	Yes	No
7. Conducts Surveys	No	Yes	No
8. Stresses Service Function to Members	No	Yes	Yes
9. Enters Indirect Activist Role	No	Yes	No
10. Begins Limited Direct Action	No	Yes	No
11. Endorses All Actions Short of Strike	No	Yes	No
12. Begins Collective Bargaining	No	No	Yes

## SANTA CLARA VALLEY SECTION VIEWS REGISTRATION

Being the chairman of the one man subcommittee on Professional Registration in the Santa Clara (California) Valley Section is like being Sancho to an invisible Don Quixote. A goodly number of our approximately 7,000 members who "have heard about registration," "are interested in knowing more," "want to keep posted on changes in the law" attended a Section Meeting to hear a pro and con discussion about registration and then decided that they see no point to being registered but still "are interested", "want to know more" and so on.

There are about 25,000 IEEE members in California. Depending on the factor you choose, this means there are 50,000 to 100,000 EEs here. A little less than 7,000 are registered Professional Electrical Engineers and some of these are from out of state. It is safe to say that our Section has a minuscule number of registered EEs. Our sister section (or is it brother), San Francisco, which is about one-quarter

of our size has many more because of the emphasis on Power Engineering there.

When I became a PE in 1948, the AIEE was not unanimous in seeking registration. The IRE cared less, and the engineers who work in our area containing such organizations as Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Lockheed, GTE-Sylvania, and Fairchild, plus its offsprings still have the IRE attitude.

It should be noted that the definition of "Electrical Engineering" in the California Code includes "design of electronic and magnetic circuits and the technical control of their operation-----". This shook up a few of our members who have been advertising themselves as Consulting Electronic Engineers without being registered, but we won't squeal on them.

California does interesting things in its Legislature. Thanks to such groups as the Instrument Society of America and others, the State has begun giving registration to protect the title (not the practice) of Control Systems Engineer, Fire Protection Engineer, Safety, Nuclear, Manufacturing, Ceramic, and about 5 or 6 more. One can become, for example, a Professional Engineer in Control Systems and many of our members have registered in this category. The Santa Clara Valley PAC submitted a list of IEEE members qualified in the control systems discipline to the State Board of Examiners from which several examiners were appointed. Furthermore, our Legislature with Governor Brown's approval passed a law requiring public members (non-engineers, non-barbers, non-embalmers, etc.) to be named to all boards of registration. Medical and legal equivalents are exempt (naturally). A bill requiring a majority of public members was defeated. Another bill restricting the title "Engineer" to only registered PEs a la Texas was never introduced. All of these later legislative efforts were carried on by the California Society of Professional Engineers, an organization about the size of one of the larger IEEE sections in the state.

The point of this too long story is to ask my fellow PACers what they are doing about registration, if anything, and to solicit information on your plans of action or inaction. Perhaps we should just treat registration like vanilla ice cream — it is available to those who want to buy it.

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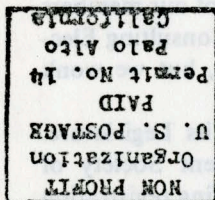
Ed Note: Al Barauck is a candidate for Santa Clara Valley PAC Chairman for 1977-78.

## LET'S HEAR FROM YOU

News and views from all PACs are still needed for future issues. Won't you bring us up-to-date on your activities and let your opinions be known via these columns? Send material to:

Frank E. Lord  
35 Hartford Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070





## QUICK REACTION NETWORK

Santa Clara Valley Section has been operating a Quick Reaction Network (QRN) for several years. This network receives information about pending legislative bills of particular interest to engineers, thereby enabling members to influence their outcome by such means as letters to congressmen. Mailings to the QRN members encourage communication to appropriate legislators and committees and provide a sample letter. One example is the adverse effects that proposed tax reform legislation would have had on itemized deductions for professional expenses (such as IEEE membership fees).

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## PENSION PLANS EXPLAINED

How to publish on a subject that is of vital interest to everyone earning an income, but that is buried in Acts of Congress, complicated by IRS regulations, and changing all the time?

Leo Young, active in professional activities since the very beginning, and his wife, Fay Young are tackling this almost impossible problem in a novel and original way. They published their book *Everything You Should Know About Pension Plans* in August 1976, and gave what the *American Library Association Booklist* calls "an extraordinarily complete and well-organized" account of Pension Plans, which (according to *IEEE Spectrum*) takes the mystery out of" the subject. In 173 pages and with 27 tables the book gives a remarkably clear picture of pension options and possibilities, and what every worker can do about them.

Not content with this accomplishment, Fay and Leo Young decided to keep their book current by inserting an "update sheet" with every volume sold after December 1, 1976. The first update sheet, dated December 1976, explains how the 1976 Tax Reform Act affects pension plans. The

principles embodied in the text were not affected by this Act, but some of the details were changed.

The latest update sheet can be obtained for a nominal charge of 50 cents by writing to the publisher. The book itself costs \$4.95, plus 50 cents for handling and mailing from Bethesda Books, P.O. Box 34567, Bethesda, MD 20034.

Excerpts from some early reviews follow.

- "...could be the wisest \$4.95 you invest." *Electronic Engineering Times*.
- "...extraordinarily complete and well-organized." *Booklist*, January 1977.
- "A comprehensive book on pension plans." *Surgical Business*.
- "...will give you a sound layman's knowledge." *Veterinary Economics*.
- "...takes the mystery out of (pension plans)." *IEEE Spectrum*.
- "...can help workers decide...." Senator Hubert H. Humphrey.
- "A valuable little volume." *Washington Star*.

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## WHO SHOULD RECEIVE IMPACT?

All PAC Chairmen should be receiving this newsletter. All other participants and interested members may receive it as well. To add names to the mailing list contact:

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