

Editorial

My fellow communications engineers—

Just what are we?

We all answer to the title Communications Engineer, but we are an astonishingly diverse group.

We purvey communications services to people and machines.

We also use communications to our own ends: we process data, we operate transportation networks, we operate electric power networks, and we relay the results of scientific experiments such as changes in astronauts' heartbeats. We sort out originators and recipients and perform miracles of logic to locate any address in any kind of network.

We design circuits as complex as in any branch of electronic technology. We produce many one-of-a-kind exotic systems and we also manufacture hardware in vast quantities. We design communication cables, pole line hardware, and cable plows.

We operate on the principle that anything that can be described electrically can be communicated. Our efforts are supported by everyone. Our impact on society in general is major. We work for large companies and small companies, for the Federal Government, for states, cities, and small towns. We teach and we do "ivory tower" research.

Some of us depend heavily on theory to create new ways to perform our communications chores. Others are intent only on practical matters such as finding the right piece of hardware to do a specific job, or devising a maintenance procedure that will keep electronic systems in service despite limited availability of competent craftsmen.

These are just a few of the thoughts that came out of the first meeting of our Communication Policy Board, along with many others that we will develop at subsequent meetings. The question of diversity has also been debated vigorously by our Board of Governors. They are making a sincere attempt to shape the affairs of the Society in such a way that it will be of maximum value to all its members.

No matter where we find ourselves in the broad spectrum of communication technology, every one of us needs to be sure today that our technical and management proficiency is at the highest possible level. We are fortunate to find ourselves in a relatively prosperous branch of the electronics industry. Competition between us is keen but demand for our services is high. This state of affairs has attracted the attention of many unemployed and underutilized electrical engineers from other disciplines. In the months ahead we can expect competition

for our jobs and for our companies' business from people who may bring novel and creative ideas to bear on problems within our field of endeavor.

Under these circumstances, our Board of Governors has decided to bring to the membership a greatly expanded program of services. With the requirement for technical updating greater than ever before, our publication program will be expanded to 1200 pages and our Society will be a major participant this year in two comprehensive technical meetings.

The additional services cost more per member. The Board has voted to increase the membership assessment from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per year. The Board approved the expanded program in the sincere belief that even with the increased costs, it is in the best interests of our members in the long run.

Another step being taken to cover our increased expense is the assessment of voluntary page charges. Voluntary page charges are used in other IEEE Groups and are assessed on the author's company or institution. Most organizations respond favorably to this request for additional support. There is a benefit to any organization that is identified with the author of a worthwhile paper appearing in our TRANSACTIONS.

Our publications program this year includes the usual six regular issues that will cover our members' broad spectrum of interest in addition to this issue's special Part II on "Computer Communications," "Communications in Japan," scheduled for August 1972, and "Mobile Communications," early in 1973.

Besides our usual participation in the International Conference on Communications, the Society is planning full technical program participation in the National Telecommunications Conference to be held in Houston in December. This assures us that opportunities for presentation will be available at conferences that are national or international in scope, for a larger share of the good technical papers produced by our communications engineers and scientists. Both these conferences are filled nearly to capacity. We expect that possibly as early as 1974 there will be a third conference organized somewhere outside North America.

Our Society is off to a good start. More than ever I am impressed by the competence and dedication of your other officers and your Board of Governors. All are striving to act in the best interests of the membership. We need more communications from you, and I hope that each of you who has an interest will call or write me to let me know your desires.

—ALAN F. CULBERTSON