Global Communications Newsletter

July 1998

An Introduction to the Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers (IETE): A New IEEE ComSoc Sister Society

By Major General K. B. Jhaldiyal, Secretary of IETE, India

ComSoc recently established a Sister Society relationship with the Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers (IETE) of India. The cooperation agreement between ComSoc and IETE was signed by Tom Plevyak, ComSoc President, and R. K. Arora, IETE President, on 4 March, 1998. Former ComSoc President Steve Weinstein established initial contact with IETE in 1996. In 1997 Tom volunteered to undertake negotiations with IETE, and prepared the draft General Agreement and Pulications Side Letter. Tom and Steve visited New Delhi in August and December 1997, respectively. They had many substantial discussions with IETE people.

In this agreement, ComSoc initiates a 20 percent discount on the membership fee for an individual who is a member of both organizations. Such a discount program will bring essential benefits to a number of members. Therefore, we are making every effort to implement various attractive cooperation initiatives in Sister Society relationships (see the July "Message from the President" in *IEEE Communications Magazine*). These new programs are now under discussion among a number of Sister Societies on the occasion of renewal of Sister Society agreements.

The IETE was established in 1953 and is one of the leading professional societies with the objective of the advancement of the science and technology of electronics, telecommunications, and information technology. The IETE serves more than 45,000 members, both individuals and companies/organizations, from India and abroad. Its members are the key scientific and technical professionals engaged in all aspects of the development of high-tech areas in these disciplines.

The corporate headquarters of the Institution are located at No. 2, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi 110 003. It is well organized to meet the needs of membership activities and conducts the affairs of the IETE under the overall supervision of the Council, which consists of 36 elected members, including a President and three Vice-Presidents. Activities of the Institution are planned, coordinated, and executed by nine different committees with Council members and special invitees as members. It has a full-time secretary as its Executive Head. From the very beginning, the IETE has recognized the need to spread its technical activities to all regions of the country. For this purpose, local centers have been established in major cities. There are 38 centers spread all over India, including one in Kathmandu, Nepal.

To achieve its objectives, the IETE promotes and conducts basic engineering and continuing technical education programs for human resource development; organizes conferences, symposia, and workshops involving professionals, students, and industry associations for the advancement of the discipline; promotes the use of state-of-the-art techniques of instruction; provides a forum for discussion on national policies; stimulates R&D in the discipline and brings out quality publications for all levels of readership. The Institution fosters advancement of the profession and stimulates its members and others to higher levels of accomplishment by recognizing excellence through awards. Twelve such awards are bestowed annually upon selected professionals every year. In addition, the Honorary Fellowship of the Institution is bestowed upon persons who have achieved eminence in the discipline and distinguished persons in the field of science, technology, and industry. Its Honorary Fellows include such luminaries as Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Dr. V. S. Arunachalam, Prof. M. G. K. Menon, Prof. Jayant Narlikar, Prof. Thomas Kailath, Dr. B. S. Leo Esaki, Mr. Olof Lundberg, and Mr. Pekka Tarjanne.

Recognizing that information and knowledge are primary resources, the IETE has been engaged from the very beginning in establishing national standards for different levels of professionals in its discipline. As a result, new career opportunities have opened up for student members through IETE Examinations at diploma, graduate, and post-graduate levels. The regulations/syllabi for all these examinations are drafted by specialists and revised periodically. These examinations have received recognition from the government of India and premier training institutions within the country and abroad.

IETE publications support the members throughout the information curve and include journals, books, conference proceedings, and other publications targeted at specific readership:

- *IETE Journal of Research* (disseminating original research work): bimonthly, covers research/academic papers based on original work and technology reviews on emerging topics. It reports 70 percent of the fundamental and applied research work being undertaken in the country in the areas of interest.
- *IETE Technical Review* (updates technical knowledge): bimonthly, covers design/development and review papers of topical interest in order to keep members abreast of state-of-the-art technologies in the areas of interest.
- *IETE Journal of Education*: quarterly, provides a supplementary resource to students preparing for their qualifying examinations in order to broaden their understanding of concepts.
- *IETE Newsletter*: bimonthly, covers IETE news and useful information for corporate members.

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MELECON '98 in Tel Aviv, Israel: A Successful Regional Conference

By Jacob Baal-Schem, Israel

Seventeen years after the First Mediterranean Electrotechnical Conference (held in 1981), the 9th MELECON met again in Tel Aviv. About 450 attendees from 20 countries participated in this Region 8 Conference, technically co-sponsored by the IEEE Communications Society. About 320 papers are included in the 1500 pages of the two volumes of Conference Proceedings.

With a large participation of delegates from Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Macedonia, Turkey, Spain, Sweden, and even Mexico, among other countries, MELECON was a real "Global Village" meeting. One could sense globalization while Italian, Yugoslav, and Russian participants sat together in a session or had coffee during the break, or when Greek and American researchers discussed a common subject with an Israeli student. The spirit of "Networking the World" was truly felt at this IEEE conference.

The opening speech was presented by Dr. Baal-Schem, General Chair of the conference, followed by greetings from representatives of the Association of Engineers and Architects in Israel and other sponsors, as well by the Director General of the Ministry of Communications. IEEE Past-President Chuck Alexander kept the audience abreast with his Keynote Lecture on "Engineering in the 21st Century."

About 45 Technical Sessions, in seven parallel tracks, organized by the Technical Program Committee headed by Prof. Anthony Weiss, dealt with the different topics of the Conference — from Power Systems to Aerospace and Electronic Systems, and from Technological Education to Robotics and Automation. Special emphasis was given to students, and their papers were entered in a contest where six outstanding papers were cited as prize winners. In addition, the Region 8 Student Paper Contest was held during the conference, and its winners were recognized by the Regional Student Activities Chair, Prof. Levent Onural.

Because the conference was held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Israel, the folklore show presented at the Social Evening — sponsored by the Israel Electronics Industries Association — was related to the different cultural aspects of the nation and the country. Dancers and musicians who were also Tel Aviv University students performed and swept up the attendees and their partners into Israeli folkdances.

IEEE Spectrum brought its contribution by including a special report, "Israel — A High-Tech Heaven" in its May issue, which coincided with both National Independence Day (15 May) and MELECON '98 (18–20 May). Some of the Israeli activities were presented at the different sessions.

MELECON '98 justified again the necessity of holding face-to-face meetings "to provide an atmosphere to enhance the interpersonal rapport of a large number of engineers" and "to provide opportunities for students and young engineers to meet their experienced peers" as stipulated in the IEEE Meetings Manual. In an era when most of our connections are made electronically, there is still a need for personal contacts between peers. The representative of the IEEE Cyprus Section already invited the participants to MELECON 2000, to be held 22–24 May on the welcoming island of Cyprus (visit http://www.cycollege.ac.cy/ieee.html).

New Benefits for Members

By Carol Coffey, Membership Marketing Manager, IEEE Marketing Department

Is your e-mail alias longer than your snail-mail address? Do you have trouble fitting all of it on your business card? If you are an IEEE member (and you probably are if you are reading this), IEEE is offering a new membership benefit: an e-mail alias to each current member. Affiliates are not eligible for this benefit. An IEEE alias is easy to remember, and identifies you as a member to other e-mail correspondents. Even better, this service includes free virus scanning of all e-mail attachments. (The scanning tool is updated weekly to protect you from the latest virus.) Best of all, if you move, it moves with you. In other words, if you change providers/jobs/names, you update your own contact information — no waiting, no worries.

You can apply for your own IEEE alias via the Web or e-mail. To use the Web, go to http://www.ieee.org/eleccomm and click on IEEE Alias Service Overview. Click on IEEE Alias Request, then complete the form. To apply by e-mail, send an e-mail message to alias-info@ieee.org. You will receive an autoresponse message with instructions. You have only to send back the information requested in the proper format and your alias will be established.

Please remember that it is each member's responsibility to make sure that his/her alias points to an active, viable e-mail address. Failure to maintain your IEEE membership and/or the vitality of the alias will result in termination of the benefit.

Free Society Membership

It may not be news, but it sure bears repeating. IEEE Membership Development (MD) has supported Society membership growth by working with Societies and Regions sponsoring technical conferences to recruit new IEEE members. MD will pay for one IEEE Society membership (usually membership in the Society sponsoring the conference) for each new IEEE member recruited at an IEEE-sponsored conference. To be able to make this offer, the conference's sponsoring entity must print the IEEE conference tracking code provided by IEEE MD on the application. To be eligible for this free Society membership offer, the applicant must have registered at the conference as a non-member and must be applying for a grade of membership above Student. Is your Society or Region planning a conference? Why not contact IEEE MD (w.hunter@ieee.org) to get a tracking code and full details on how you can make this special membership incentive offer at your conference?

Communications Chapter Formed in New Zealand

By Loreen Ozolins
IEEE New Zealand Communications Society Chapter Chair

A communications chapter is a local body which represents the IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) in a particular geographical region. In this case, our geographical location is New Zealand. The technical focus of the Communications Society for the New Zealand Chapter is as follows:

"All aspects of the advancement of the science, engineering, technology, and applications for transferring information between locations by the use of signals. This includes: sources and destinations involving all types of terminals, computers, and information processors; all pertinent systems and operations to bring about this transfer; guided and unguided transmission media; switched and unswitched networks; and network layouts, protocols, architectures, and implementations."

The IEEE New Zealand North and South sections intend to jointly form a new Communications Society chapter in order to facilitate the increase in technical information and international speakers available on key communications topics. It is appropriate that a ComSoc chapter be formed in New Zealand given that the Editor-in-Chief of the *IEEE Transactions on Communications* is Professor Des Taylor of the University of Canterbury. Prof. Taylor says, "New Zealand is doing first-class manufacturing and research in several areas of communications and has a significant presence in several areas of communications systems technologies. It is becoming increasingly important that organizations such as IEEE and ComSoc provide professional infrastructure support for engineers and technologists working in the field."

The New Zealand Communications Chapter would like to cite from *The ComSoc Community 1997* publication on a few of the objectives of the Communications Society in service to its members:

- Creation of research and innovation by the Communications Society community through hot topic identification
- Dissemination worldwide by publications, presentations, and electronic media
- Exchange by Chapter activities, workshops, discussions, mutual assessments, general networking on technical subjects, and other means of professional communication
- Education, both basic and continuing: tutorials, short courses, guest lecture programs, Chapter support, and other delivery mechanisms/accreditation

The representatives in the IEEE North and South Island sections will be working with these guidelines to develop a specific program for its New Zealand members. For more information, contact:

- South Island: Aaron Gulliver (gulliver@elec.canterbury.ac.nz)
- North Island: Kevin Sowerby (kw.sowerby@auckland. ac.nz)

Brazilian Telecommunications: The Privatization Process

By Abraham Alcaim, Brazil

The 27 state companies of the Brazilian Telecommunications System will be rearranged into 13 new companies: three regional holdings — Tele Norte-Leste, Telesp, and Tele Centro-Sul — plus Embratel for fixed telephony exploration and nine companies for cellular telephony services. Tele Norte-Leste, Telesp, and Tele Centro-Sul cover 54, 22, and 24 percent of the Brazilian population, respectively. The Brazilian government expects the privatization process to be concluded by the end of July 1998.

Telebras, the present holding that is now being split into the 12 new holdings for privatization, has its assets valued at approximately US$27 billion. The holding with greatest assets is Tele Norte-Leste with US$8.1 billion. Telesp, which shows a very intense traffic density, follows with US$7.1 billion. Particularly, the price to control the fixed telephony of Telesp is between US$6 and 6.8 billion. One of the most lucrative companies of the system is Telesp Cellular, with assets valued at approximately US$800 million.

The telecommunications privatization process is certainly the greatest one being carried out in Brazil. Interested groups can make proposals for all the companies but can only acquire one of the four holdings for fixed telephony and a maximum of two companies for cellular telephony. The buyers will be engaged, by contract, in the continuity of the investments programmed by the government until the year 2003. These include provision for collective accesses, services in remote areas, and terminals for public institutions. The rules imposed by the Brazilian government on the buyers of the fixed telephone companies and Embratel will allow about 50 million terminals to be in operation by the year 2005.

As a result of incorporation of modern technological advances, the user is expected to be compensated for the long wait for efficient telecommunications services. Moreover, if tax protections are implemented for component manufacturers in the country, the expansion of Brazilian telecommunications may become one of the most solid frameworks for the country's economic development.

Chapters News: IEEE TAB Has Appointed a Society Chapter Coordinator

By Linda La Motta, Society Chapter Coordinator, IEEE Technical Activities

The Technical Activities Board of the IEEE approved the position of Society Chapter Coordinator last year, in response to the directions of TAB and the Sections Chapters Congress to provide more focus on chapter development. The person chosen to fill this newly created position effective 27 April 1998 was Linda La Motta. She will provide Society Chapter Coordinators with a single point of contact within the IEEE, and her goal is to significantly improve the dissemination of information to Chapter Coordinators. Services will include, but not be limited to, assistance with chapter subsidy payments, providing chapter opportunity information, and coordinating joint chapters between Societies. Linda will function as an information repository and will work to ensure that chapter coordinators are supported and that Society support of chapters is improved.

For additional information, please contact Linda at the following: tel: +1-732-562-3846; fax: +1-732-562-1769; e-mail: l.lamotta@ieee.org

IETE: A NEW COMSOC SISTER SOCIETY/*(Continued from page 1)*

• IETE Book Series: published jointly with Tata McGraw Hill, to meet the reference and advanced-level needs of R&D engineers, scientists, managers, and students; published jointly with National Book Trust, India, to popularize electronics, telecommunications, and related subjects among general readers.

• Conference proceedings, white papers on technology. At present, the IETE publishes over 2000 pages annually in technical journals (special issues), Conference Proceedings, and the IETE Book Series. IETE also publishes white papers/policy papers on matters of national significance in the fields of electronics, telecommunications, and IT.

The Institution recognizes that its future leadership in an electronic environment depends heavily on sharing of resources. Accordingly, the Institution has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (IEEE), United States; Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE), United Kingdom; Hungarian Scientific Society for Telecom, (HTE), Hungary; and IEEE Communications Society (IEEE ComSoc), United States. In addition, it supports the government's initiative in the formulation of policies and social initiatives directed toward specific segments of our society.

The IETE promotes interaction with industry. Companies join IETE directly as Sustaining Donor Members (SDMs), and their representatives find a place in its Council. The IETE Apex Forum provides a platform for the exchange of meaningful ideas among policy makers/implementors, industry leaders, leading academicians and research organizations, and eminent professionals.

The IETE Centre for Advanced Studies in Emerging Technologies (IETE-CASET) devises short-term intensive courses for professionals in various areas of emerging technologies.

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www.comsoc.org/pubs/gcn

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The Institution has done pioneering work in the field of distance education. Adapting to changes in technologies, the IETE Centre for Distance Education through Space (IETE-CDETS) has been set up. Using satellite media, efforts are being made to reach a larger cross-section of students and offer them the advantage of interactive classroom sessions.

The IETE is keenly conscious of its responsibilities toward the weaker sections of the society. Participation in socially relevant programs such as those sponsored by the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) and Summer School in Electronics (SUSIE), under the government of India, reiterates its emphasis on such issues. At present under the NORAD scheme, entry-level programmer training for women in economically weaker sections of society is being conducted at our 17 Local Centres for approximately 1400 women.

The Institution has always taken the initiative in studying and implementing programs to resolve the problems arising from the lacunae in current technologies. For example, the year 2000 problem (Y2K) is engaging the serious attention of the Institution. A program is currently underway in collaboration with a software agency to train suitable candidates in IBM mainframe software technology to equip young professionals to take up mainframe programming as their career and expose them to various facets of programming practice and project management.

The Institution has been recognized by the government of India's Ministry of Science and Technology as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and has also been noted as an educational institution of national eminence.

Conference Report on wmATM '98

By Willie W. Lu, USA

The First International Workshop on Wireless Mobile ATM Implementations (wmATM '98) was held 6–10 April 1998 at the National Guest Hotel (XiZi Guo Bin Guan) in Hangzhou, China, sponsored by the Wireless Mobile ATM Task Force (TF-wmATM), supported by China Telecom, Eastcom, UTS, DELSON Group, and Zhejiang University, and held in cooperation with the ATM Forum and IEEE China.

In general, wmATM '98 was very successful and fruitful. We had intensive discussion of wmATM technologies and developments. As one of the candidates for future wireless multimedia communications, wmATM's enhanced intelligent platform will surely take the lead in implementation. QoS guaranteed features will make wmATM a great success in the near future. In this direction, TF-wmATM will work closely with the WATM WG to push forward the wmATM activities worldwide.

In addition to the technical sessions, Lou Dellaverson (Chair of WATM WG), Qi Bi (Distinguished Scientist of Bell Labs), Bart Arroyo (EC DGXIII Commissioner), and Qianli Yang (Former Minister, MPT of China) gave important speeches and support to this event.

Meanwhile, all the participants had chances to experience the huge demands and potential markets for telecommunications developments in China — the fast growing economy vs. the poorly developing telecommunications facilities. The big gap between them urgently needs to be filled. In addition, good networking is very limited, with no well-equipped nationwide banking network, no booking network, and so on. To complete processing of a credit card payment takes a minimum of three weeks; it is amazing. However, herein lie our opportunities. In fact, several wmATM system trials are already in operation in some harbors and plants, although they are not fully standardized.

The next workshop, wmATM '99, is scheduled to be held in San Francisco, California, USA, in June 1999.