

Life Member Coordinator

Charles Turner

The Past

In taking over from Jacob Baal-Schem this year, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the excellent work that he carried out to develop Life Member activities, creating a sound foundation from which they can grow..

Outlook

- There are currently 11 Life Member Affinity Groups (LM AGs) in the Region. There are also several Sections where there are enough Life Members to justify consideration of the formation of an LMAG. In addition, if it could be agreed that retired members could be granted nominal Life Member status, the number of Sections in a good position to form viable LM AGs increases significantly. This year I plan to contact these Sections to encourage them to form an LM AG and to invite retired members to participate. Of course, all members are welcome to support activities organized by Life Members.
- The most positive development for LM AGs would be the emergence of a clearly defined set of activities that would command the interest and commitment of Life Members willing to serve as volunteers. Looking across to the USA and Canada, many LM AGs there are active in helping schools, in mentoring young engineers, and in community projects. Remaining active is appealing to retired engineers, who often have special skills to offer. This should apply, in theory, to the members in Region 8. The challenge is how to harness this large pool of talent for the benefit of the local community. A first step would be for all Sections to appoint a volunteer as Section Archivist/Historian with responsibility for documenting the progress of the Section since its formation.
- The IEEE Life Members Committee (LMC) organizes technology-themed tours around the IEEE Milestones. The fifth tour will be organized in the Region 8 (France, Switzerland, and Germany), 6-17 May 2015.

Best practices

One of the most popular interests among Life Members is the history of technology. Sometimes this relates to personal history (or reminiscences) drawn from careers spent in industry, academia, or government service, including in the military. The IEEE Global History Network (GHN) provides unlimited opportunities for individual members to contribute their own personal experiences, or their personal research into historical events within the scope of IEEE's interests. Two current examples illustrate the high level of interest in history among LMAG volunteers. The first is the HISTELCON 2015 Conference being held in Israel August 16-21. Another example is the Milestone ceremony to be held on April 1st in London to celebrate the invention by Alan Blumlein of stereophonic sound reproduction in the 1930s. Other Milestones in France, Germany, Switzerland and the Ukraine have been awarded this year or are in the pipeline.