

Life Member Coordinator

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Goals

- Enhance and encourage interest in electrical and electronic engineering at secondary and tertiary (college) levels.
- Utilize the vast experience of LMs to impact the general public's knowledge of electrical and electronic engineering and increase understanding of the role of engineers.
- Foster collaborations in pre-university education and encourage students to consider taking up engineering as a career.
- Promulgate the history of electrical engineering together with information and related technologies.

Status

This status report from Charles Turner (Region 8 Life Member Coordinator during 2017) highlights two notable developments of Life Member activities during the second half-year 2017 :

- 1) Meeting of LMAG Chairs in Neuchatel, Switzerland, September 5th 2017. The LMAG Chairs from Benelux, France, Italy, Lebanon, Slovenia, Switzerland, and UK & Ireland held a meeting on September 5th to coincide with the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Swiss microelectronic watch industry, at the Microcity Centre in Neuchatel. This was the first meeting of LMAG Chairs in Region 8. The continuing loss of older members was a matter of concern in most Sections and needed to be addressed urgently. Among the proposals discussed were ways to improve the quality of service for older members, a review of the criteria for qualification as a Life member, and the need for wider inclusion of older members in Life member activities. A proposal for the involvement of Life members in IEEE's Humanitarian Activities (e.g. the IEEE SIGHT programs) was also discussed. These are expected to be especially of interest to retired members: it was agreed that Sections should be encouraged to begin recruiting volunteers from their Life and retired members for specific projects in their local communities under the SIGHT program.
- 2) Life Member Committee Task Force A Task Force set up by the IEEE Life Member Committee has been working on the problem of engaging Life members more actively. Some proposals being discussed include improving communications with Life members, and re-vitalising LMAGs. One potentially significant proposal argues for the active involvement of all members in the pre-retirement age group in Life member activities. This would help to boost the number of volunteers and active members in LMAGs, making LMAGs viable even in Sections with very few Life members. The Task Force report will be discussed at the next LMC meeting to be held in April. In summary, the main recommendation is that the current focus of the IEEE Life member community must be on proposals to raise the level of member involvement so that members at the end of their technical career are motivated to remain as members. The challenge to MGA is to offer an attractive menu of activities and services with particular appeal for older members through their LMAGs.

Outlook

The recruitment of long-serving members approaching LM status, together with retired members, would transform the viability of the smaller LMAGs. Increased collaboration between LMAGs and other IEEE Operational Units would open up new opportunities for LM activities. Sections can make better use of the knowledge and experience of older members, who generally have more time to serve as Section volunteers. More resources from MGA, Region 8, and Sections, would be needed if LMAGs are to be able to expand their activities, including sponsorship from industry and grant-giving organisations.

Points of Concern

Recommendations to R8 Section Chairs:

- 1) It is important that each Section nominates an official representative (it is not necessary that the representative be a Life Member) to a proposed R8 Life Members Sub-Committee, even if there is no LMAG formed yet in the Section.
- 2) We suggest that each Section send a formal invitation to older members approaching LM status to join their Section's LMAG. This would help to remove the confusion over who is eligible to participate in LMAG activities (i.e. not just LMs).
- 3) Make greater use of Life Members' knowledge and experience, for example, in mentoring Student members, and assisting Student Branches. LMs are a valuable resource for developing soft skills for job interviews and early career know-how. Other examples include Student Paper Contest judging, hosting book sharing days, involvement with local school districts (pre-university), and hosting Careers Days and Science Fair Judging.
- 4) They can also help with the formation of new Student Branches and Young Professional Affinity Groups. LMs can also be a reference point for Senior member and Fellow applications, and candidates for IEEE awards. With other experienced members such as Past Chairs and former Officers, Life members can set up a Section Advisory Panel to guide the future development of the Section.

Other Issues to report