

# FORUM

## The "New" Society

By R. L. Minter

**Y**OUR TECHNICAL SOCIETY (and mine) is in the midst of the greatest technological explosion of all time; our size and performance is increasing and improving along with all other technical societies. Judging from membership and attendance at national meetings you, as a member, are pleased with its service.

In the past several years, new societies have been formed in specialized areas within your society's area of interest. Perhaps you have had to join these also, in order to keep informed. As a technology grows, areas within it mature and call for greater attention. It is possible that such area development could be measured by the numbers of people employed within its confines. It might be concluded that the technological explosion inherently must generate new societies in the maturing areas of specialty. If so, then the technological explosion is self-limiting, because the generation of knowledge within each special area must, by design, be primarily limited to that area.

As many new discoveries are based on the mixture of other technologies to form something new, such discoveries are left to the entrepreneur who will search all disciplines for opportunities. Essentially, such discoveries are then related to the time, chance, and ambition with a consequent deceleration of the technological explosion. As a contributor to national goals and stature, our society cannot allow the resultant slowdown in communication and growth. The birth of fledging societies is not a triumph of a new technology, but rather an indication that our existing societies are failing in their responsibilities in some manner.

Just why do new societies form? The founders believe that existing societies are not giving *their* technology a fair consideration. They feel that a small group will be more active and limit the amount of technical data through which they must search to get data pertaining to their interests. They believe that when an existing society offers to serve their needs during formation stages, that the society was remiss in not recognizing their need.

To an existing society, the formation of a new one constitutes a loss of technical response. Its membership is restricted in obtaining data in the affected area and often gets older data if it gets any. National meetings occasionally conflict, pulling members of both societies in opposite directions. This reduces the ability of both to perform financially, and ultimately costs the membership in increased dues, fees, or both.

**R**ECENTLY, THE GOVERNING BOARDS of both societies approved the formation of a council between related societies initially composed of SPIE and ASP. Temporarily named the American Photo Technical Council (APT), its purpose is advisory and aimed at coordinating member society functions, combining meetings where desirable, and generally improving information exchange. This should eventually result in better service at lower cost to the members.

Formation of APT is a step toward remedying the divisive effects over the past few years. It can become the bridge of knowledge between societies in Photo Technology. It is the remedy, but it will not eliminate the problem.

The problem is in organization. Any national society encompasses a Special Technology defined by its membership. It is subdivided into regions or chapters to provide geographic organization and a larger base. Therefore, a national society is a vertical structure as shown in Figure 1. The geographic elements generate continuity and interest at a local level through monthly meetings. The technical papers should and often do evolve into journal publications or papers of national stature for the annual meeting. The sustaining membership produces an annual equipment exhibit and can and does show equipment at the geographic units periodically. The national produces and directs all national meetings, equipment exhibits and publications, as well as handling all major legal and financial problems of the society. If the problem is organization, and a change is desirable, how can it be effected without destroying the society?

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The solution is already suggesting itself. SPIE undertook the sponsoring of "Seminars-in-depth" on a national level a few years ago and the response was excellent. The underlying principle was to explore *specific areas* of the technology on a very high technical level. Such a detailed exploration was impossible at the national symposium because of the large numbers of areas that must be covered. These seminars proved to be both financially and technically an over-whelming success.

Recently, a new embryo society called the Fiber Optics Working Group was approached by SPIE with the suggestion that they affiliate. This time, special provisions were made to preserve their autonomy in the form of mailing lists and a section of the SPIE Journal. Other societies also suggested affiliation, but without the proviso for maintaining a separate technical entity. The group chose to affiliate with SPIE, and in so doing, indicating the organization which will enable the "new" society to grow while serving the needs of small, vital groups within.

THE "NEW" TECHNICAL society must provide a means for the existence of small dynamic groups on a NATIONAL level. They can be called *working groups* for lack of a better name. Members of these groups could also be members of geographic sections or chapters. This will allow them their specialization while exposing them to the broad knowledge of the society on local and national levels.

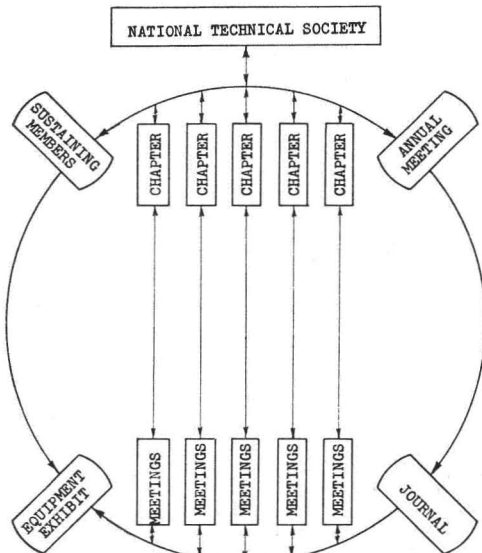


FIG. 1.

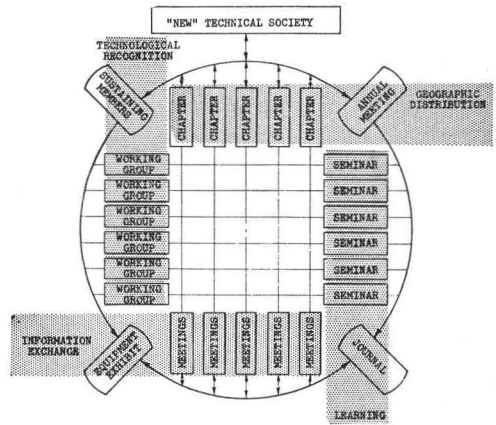


FIG. 2

The seminar then becomes the national communications media for the working group. Their technology is exhibited and expounded on a national level and in depth without the diluting influence of the broad base of the society. The seminar program then has a full team to prepare it, giving a far better technical control on content than has heretofore been possible.

Seminar Proceedings as published, become the annual record of each working group's progress and technology. Each series of Proceedings will then form the history and progress of that sector of the society.

The national meetings will also improve in technical quality because the seminars can be digested and presented in capsule form at the national meetings.

Figure 2 shows the organization of the *new* society. Note that the previous vertical organization has been maintained. The new working groups have been added as a horizontal organization, forming a communications network in both vertical and horizontal directions. The network can work at national and local levels. Sustaining members can communicate on a national, local, technology, equipment demonstration or advertizing level. Chapters can prepare meetings in specific technologies or in several, and will know by working group participation where the major interests lie. The working group has the independent communications identity it seeks and yet is part of a broader technical society which can only enrich the knowledge of the participants. The Equipment exhibits can only serve a broadening exposure with resultant increase in markets and equipment applications. The Journal will grow in size and quality with sections devoted to the various working groups and equipments.

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HOW WILL THIS NEW organization reduce technical society fever? First, it offers any embryo group an identity within the organization rather than without. This means a savings in time and money for incorporation. Second, it offers more to the participants than the separate society could offer in the form of publications, national recognition and broad exposure. Finally, it can provide the group with a testing ground for validating a need for existence. Any group seeking an identity can organize and conduct a seminar. The response to the seminar will validate the need for a working group. The attendees at the seminar can join the society (if not already a member) and join the working group (even if current members of the society).

Such working groups must meet certain requirements. They must have a minimum number of members-in-good-standing as participants. They must actively support

society publications and their own seminars on a technical basis. They must maintain a budget and request and validate financial matters with the national society. Each society must prepare operating procedures covering the new working groups.

The horizontal addition of working groups to a society's structure adds a welcome mat for new technologies to use and grow within the society. They can no longer say that the society failed to provide for their existence.

It is hoped that our society will give serious thought to this concept. In a general way it is a plan formulated by many people and through an evolutionary process. Your officers and board have continually sought better ways to serve your interests. In a major change as suggested, it is better if all members are acquainted with the concept so that each may have an opportunity to criticize or improve the plan. It is only through your support and interest that the society can continue to exist.

## Sustaining Members Get a Break

The Sustaining Members will receive a 10 per cent reduction in advertising charges, based on the published rate schedule, beginning with the current issue of PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING. They will also receive a 10 per cent reduction on the charges of booth space at future Annual Conventions, contingent on the financial outcome of each convention. These actions have been authorized by the Executive Committee and Board of Direction of the American Society of Photogrammetry in recognition and deep appreciation for the continuing support of its Sustaining Membership.

## Photogrammetric Briefs

Your Editor is on the lookout for material with which to inaugurate a new feature in this journal, namely, short technical items which might not be considered as *articles* in the customary sense of the word.

From time to time a photogrammetric specialist may discover a useful principle, device, or technique which may not necessarily warrant development as a *paper* or *article*—this is the place for it. Or he may wish to describe the solution to a common problem in

layman's language, or by elementary mathematics, neither of which might be on a par with his usual publications, but which might nevertheless be most useful information to many readers. More than 300 student members receive this journal regularly; a bit of elementary learning might not be too bad for the rest of us also.

Send your Briefs to the Society headquarters. Who wants to be the first?

## The Yearbook Number

This issue is called the *Yearbook Number* although it differs considerably from previous yearbooks. This year the material has been placed in several issues: May—Sustaining Membership; June—The Annual Convention; July—The Society and its Membership; August—The Annual Committee Re-

ports; and September—The Annual Awards of the Society. Each issue contains technical articles as well.

Next year it is planned to return to the previous practice of placing all these features in one (the August) issue and not include any technical articles in that issue.