



CSEG Bylaws and Past Presidents

How do we link our bylaws and our past presidents together on a common theme? Let me start by outlining the important role played by the past presidents of the CSEG. We will then review some proposed changes to the bylaws. The link between the two will be shown.

Past Presidents & President Advisory Council

The CSEG past presidents are keeping an eye on the well being of the society. How do they do that? Each year there are two meetings that take place involving the past presidents of the CSEG.

First, the President Advisory Council (PAC) consisting of the last ten immediate past presidents convenes once a year to address current concerns of the society. There could be more frequent meetings if warranted. It shows the commitment of those who have served as president in the past. This meeting is chaired by the immediate past president. Second, all past presidents are invited to attend a luncheon where the current president gives an address equivalent to the 'state of the union'. The incoming president (vice president) gives an overview of the plan for the coming year. It is a time for any past president to express concern, to question, to give approval.

These special meetings that take place behind the scene are one way of keeping our society in good health. On-going comments and input by any member to any executive is welcome at any time.

Two of the issues discussed at the PAC had to do with the bylaws: the membership dues and the code of ethics.

Membership Dues

The CSEG dues are currently set at \$50 in the bylaws. The PAC recommends modifying the bylaws so that the CSEG executive can review membership dues and allocate changes as required. It was recommended to review this section of the bylaws in 2009, present it to a vote at the AGM in March 2010 for a potential dues increase for the year 2011. No dues increase is to be implemented in a downturn. Should there be planned dues increase in the future, particularly if the specific amount of the dues is to be removed from the bylaws, we are to ensure enough notice is given to members to offer feedback to the executive before the dues increase takes effect.

Currently the membership dues amount for about \$100,000 of our annual operating budget of about \$1.2M. The main sources of income for the CSEG are in this order: convention, DoodleTrain, RECORDER, Technical Luncheons, dues. The main expenses are: administration, DoodleTrain, RECORDER, Technical Luncheons, Outreach, also in this order. The conventions now being set-up under the JACC (Joint Annual Convention Committee with the CSPG and the CWLS) are self administered and report only a net profit to each society. The RECORDER and the Technical Luncheons

are run on a break-even basis, having the potential to make a small profit in a good year and face a deficit in a rough year. As an example, the cost of the meal at the luncheon now exceeds the price of a ticket, yet the CSEG executive is reluctant to increase the cost of the ticket in the face of the downturn. We hope to maintain our high quality talks at the same cost to our members. The DoodleTrain has provided a profit over the years, yet in 2008 we have seen a significant drop in attendance. Administration and Outreach are expenses only.

There is always a balance to maintain between the dues and the perceived value of the services offered. At the present time, the CSEG has one of the lowest dues structure of any comparable society. We are proud of it and need to approach any dues increase with caution. A question that came up: is it better to increase the dues a little bit at a time more often, or to wait many years as we have done in the past, then face a significant increase at once? It seems obvious that with the cost of living going up, our administrative costs are also rising, justifying a dues increase – just not in 2009!

Code of Ethics

Some years ago, the CSEG has included a Code of Ethics as part of the bylaws. Unfortunately, no means have been defined to tackle any issue relevant to the code of ethics. Should we remove the code of ethics? Should we fine-tune it and define a way to deal with cases pertaining to its violation? Should we make it so that only the executive can call upon an issue relevant to it? The current Code of Ethics is relatively vague and may be misleading in terms of what the executive can actually act on pertaining to member misconduct. Should we define the way an investigating committee could be set-up if needed? These questions are to be addressed as part of a review of the bylaws.

Bylaws Review

In 2009, we are planning to have a committee put together to review the bylaws and offer a rewrite where appropriate. As we move more and more towards an online world, some references to 'mailing' etc. become outdated, or at least need to be more inclusive of all means of communication. It is healthy for a society like ours to take a fresh look from time to time at the bylaws and offer a rewording to reflect the current situation, and to rewrite those sections that are deemed not quite up to what they should be. This will include a close look at the code of ethics, its wording, its implementation, or removing it altogether.

In conclusion, I want to express my sincere thanks to all the past presidents who have served, and particularly to those who have shown an on-going commitment by participating in the PAC and attending the past presidents luncheons. May I be deemed worthy of joining this elite group of CSEG volunteers!

As always, your comments are welcome! **R**

*François Aubin
President*