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Historic Nara Japan hosts July BMSB Conference; see page 4.

BTS IEEE

Fall 2016

President's Message

Bill Hayes, BTS President

Greetings BTS Members,

In my quarterly message for **Broadcast Technology**, I usually try to write something positive, and while I do think there are many positive things going on, I am concerned about the IEEE. At the time of this writing, I have just received my electronic ballot for the 2017 elections. On it there is a proposed amendment to the IEEE constitution which was favored by the board, but opposed by the leadership of many societies and councils. BTS leadership voted to oppose this amendment. As I write this message, I have no idea as to whether the proposed amendment will have or has passed or failed. I will touch on some of the particulars of the how the amendment was processed later on in this message, but first I want to address the simple subject of voting.

The IEEE and all of the operational units that make it up are at the core a membership organization. One of the great things about the IEEE is that only individuals can be members; companies cannot directly join. We as individuals choose to join. There are numerous reasons for joining and renewing, but ultimately it is our choice. So if you are reading this message, in all likelihood it is because you chose to join IEEE and BTS.

Now the hard part—every year the IEEE conducts elections and I will tell you that it is depressing to me to see how few of the IEEE members actually vote. In my view, voting is a requirement of membership! The organization exists to provide service and support to you the members, so why would you the member not want to take an active role in steering the organization to better meet your needs?

However, it is more than that. Leaders that are elected by a majority of votes from a small total of the overall voting pool don't necessarily have a mandate or guidance from total membership. Without this, we are often making what we believe are the best decisions that may not actually represent the majority of the members. And the potential for trouble can become even more concerning as leadership that is disconnected from the electorate may start to believe that it is not necessary, or it is too much trouble to reach out and engage with members. It is quite easy to begin taking for granted the real needs of a disinterested membership and substituting the perceived needs based on a single person's, or a small group's, particular point of view.

To me, that appears to be what happened with the aforementioned constitutional amendment. A group of leaders which are removed from the general membership looked at how to make the board and the organization more agile and responsive in the changing world. That is of itself probably not a bad idea, but their assumption was that this is what the membership wants; yet they did not ask the membership. The only real communication regarding the amendment seems to have been post-creation, and the message is essentially a sales pitch to the electorate to convince them to buy the product, as it will help with a problem that the membership may not know exists, or in fact, may not believe to be a problem. The more disconnected the leadership is from the community they are charged to lead, the more prone they are to make missteps based on bad assumptions. Staying connected is bi-directional, and the responsibility of all the parties.

One of the arguments that has been made in favor of the constitutional amendment is that a smaller board would be more agile and efficient, and the current board is too large. The argument against the change is that the larger board provides more membership representation from more areas within the IEEE, and therefore better represents the will of the membership to the board. I recognize that many reading this message are not citizens of the United States, but the only analogy that I can come up with relates to my country's representational democracy. Many of us are frustrated by the gridlock that happens in a polarized environment such as we have now. While there are some Presidential candidates that I believe would lobby to disband Congress to get the country moving, we should all recognize that this would eliminate our representation in our own government, and we should not and could not support such an action. I think most of the colleagues I have communicated with have a similar concern regarding the loss of representation of the membership within the IEEE.

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From the Editor

Two Anniversaries, Saving AM Radio, Ted Kuligowski

By James E. O'Neal, Editor-in-Chief

Hello Again!

Time really moves swiftly when you're having fun—with this issue, **Broadcast Technology** marks its first anniversary, and I want to extend a very sincere "thanks" to everyone who has helped us grow into our new format and "look." There's still a lot to do before we officially become a "magazine" by the IEEE's definition, but we're getting there!

As I write this in mid-summer, the fall of the year seems far away, but it will be here before you know it and with it comes one event after another: the IBC Show, our own Broadcast Symposium (this year in Hartford, Conn.), SMPTE's very special 100th anniversary celebration at their Hollywood conference, the Government Video Expo in Washington, D.C., and many others. Such events provide a great opportunity to keep in touch with today's rapidly changing television and radio technologies and should be part of your fall schedule. If you haven't started making travel plans, now is the perfect time to do so. Please check our "Event Calendar" on page 35 of this issue for dates and venues.

AM Radio (Again)

In the last issue I suggest a salvation plan for AM broadcasting. So far all the comments received about the "12-step program" that I proposed have been positive and that's always reassuring. However, it's going to take a lot more than reassurance to make medium wave radio viable again. I just spent an hour or so perusing radio ratings in some of the largest U.S. markets and it's really sad to see how far down in the mud (numbers) some of the once mighty have sunk. Makes you wonder why some of the 50 kilowatters even bother to turn on their transmitters.

There are some rather interesting exceptions though. San Francisco's KCBS and KNBR have ruled the roost in that city for the last four rating periods, surpassing all of the city's FMs. Well done; keep up the good work. (For those not familiar with the S.F. market, KCBS is an all-news operation and KNBR is a sports broadcaster.) Sorry that I can't report AM ascendency in any of the other top 25 cities (rated by population) that I examined.

Bud Connell

Interestingly, not long after my Summer **BT** editorial was distributed I had the good fortune to sit down to lunch with none other than the legendary Bud Connell. For those who aren't familiar with Bud and his influence on radio, early in his broadcasting career (1956), he went to work for Tod Storz. At that time, Storz had developed a reputation for innovating radio programming by transforming the first station he owned, KOWH, an Omaha daytimer with dismal listenership, into a solid "number one" position in rating's books. "(Storz went on to acquire AM "underdogs" in such markets as New Orleans, Kansas City and Miami, and led them into top ratings positions via his programming concepts. He was cited by **Time** magazine in 1956 "as the fastest rising figure in U.S. radio.")

Connell later left Storz, taking a job as programmer and air personality at a station competing with the Storz operation in New Orleans. Not long afterwards, he had bested Storz's ratings in that market. This happened again in Miami and resulted in Storz rehiring Connell to take charge of a recently purchased station in St. Louis. In a short time, Connell had worked his magic, boasting that lowly-rated 5 kW station to rule the St. Louis roost. The Pulse rating service pegged it as "the nation's top-rated independent station," and eventually KXOK could claim that it consistently had more audience than the market's long-established 50 kW CBS O&O, KMOX.

Obviously Mr. Connell knows something about creating radio success stories, and I couldn't resist asking him what was missing in AM radio today. Why was what once had been beachfront property now almost universally relegated to the radio slum district? Bud was quick to reply that in his opinion this was largely due to the absence of a couple of very important elements which seem to be completely ignored by today's station ownership groups: compelling programming and audience involvement. He echoed my belief too that content will always trump delivery methodologies: if someone is doing well with an all-news format on FM, then moving it to an AM outlet with equal coverage will find both audiences and ratings moving with it. A lot of Connell's career is covered in a very interesting book about the Storz empire. It's called "The Birth of Top 40 Radio: The Storz Stations' Revolution of the 1950s and 1960's," which was authored by Richard Fatherley and David MacFarland. Today's radio station operators could learn a lot from reading it!

Ted Kuligowski

Shortly before this issue of **BT** was due to close, I received word that a very longtime friend, Ted Kuligowski, has passed away. Ted, for many years, was a very active part of our organization and served as editor of the **BTS Newsletter** before stepping down due to some health issues. During part of my career in broadcast engineering Ted was also my boss, and I have some very good memories from those years. On the job or off, Ted was always positive and exuded an upbeat

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