Attendees at the meeting were:

**Officers** (voting)
Cheung, Nim
Siller, Curtis
Benedetto, Sergio
Freeman, Harvey
Lee, Byeong
Zuckerman, Doug

**Members-at-Large** (voting)
Ben-Letaief, Khaled
Moyer, Stan

**Directors** (non-voting)
Bauer, Fred
Gelman, Alex
Jajszczyk, Andrzej
Saracco, Roberto
Shapiro, Bob

**Officers** (non-voting)
Howell, Jack
LoCicero, Joe

**Absent**
Chen, Tom
Cimini, Len
Goyal, Shri
Stuettgen, Heinrich

**IEEE Div. III Director** (voting)
Karol, Mark

**Invited Guests**
Bigalke, Brian
Pape, John
Worthman, Bruce (via conf. call)

**Recording Secretary**
Swaim, Carole

1. **Opening Remarks – Nim Cheung** (Attachment 1 – Agenda, Presidents Reports)

   Nim called OpCom1 to order at 8:45 a.m. welcoming members and invited guests to his first meeting as President. The agenda was approved with modifications.

   Note: The BoG met “electronically” in January and approved the appointments for the 2006-2007 officers as required in Bylaws 3.3.4: "Appointments of the Treasurer, Chief Information Officer, Directors, and Standing Committee Chairs are made with the approval of the BoG."

   Curtis reviewed the status of Management Retreat action items, requesting updates at OpCom; actions reflect Nim’s goals—member growth and ComSoc’s relevance to industry.

2. **Officer Reports and Issues**

   A. **IEEE, TAB, Division III Reports** – Mark Karol/Doug Zuckerman, Curtis Siller (Attachment 2)

   Division III – Mark Karol

   IEEE has approved 3-tier registration fees; ComSoc can charge members a lower conference registration fee than IEEE/non-ComSoc member fees. Also, following the lead of other Societies, ComSoc could bundle Society and IEEE membership fees into the conference registration fee.

   ComSoc’s indirect infrastructure charge assessed by IEEE will be lowered by $100k per year beginning in 2007.

   “Expert Now” (IEEE online education courses) has two corporate contracts with revenues distributed among sponsoring societies. ComSoc voted to not participate (to reduce budget), but could reverse decision by paying the $20k development cost.

   **IEEE Reports** – Curtis Siller/Doug Zuckerman/Peter Staecker.
Curtis: ComSoc has been on IEEE’s Watch List since 2003. Hal Flescher will recommend removal in 2007 (rather than 2008) if ComSoc stays “in the black” this year. (Two consecutive years of positive budget and positive actual are needed to get off.)

IEEE assessed ComSoc $5.4 million to help offset IEEE’s financial problems. Curtis will work with Jack on a proposal that IEEE return a proportional amount to the societies—amount/timeframe to be determined. (action 06:01, new)

Doug presented a report on the IEEE TAB/PSPB Products & Services Committee. INSPEC is currently the indexing layer used for IEEE Xplore. IEEE is expanding coverage in indexing and citation analysis products to ensure broad access to its published content and increase the value to authors.

Peter Stauecker, 2006 VP-Elect TAB and Chair of IEEE Strategic Planning, was invited to address OpCom. The problem of membership decline is not financial since Xplore revenue more than offsets loss of member revenue (and is often offered in the workplace). But, loss of members depletes the pool of volunteers, essential to the strength of IEEE and Societies; thus, the problem of “member value” must be resolved.

IEEE President Mike Lightner issued a challenge to TAB to consider alternative membership pricing approaches. Thus, an “IEEE member card” – $30 minimum to join IEEE (only) – is under review. Members would pay additional add-on fees for specific services and a $25-membership fee (or so) to join a Society, receive their benefits, discounts, etc. Curtis requested Peter to get back to us with advice on what ComSoc could/should do going forward.

B. Marketing Overview affecting 2006-07 – John Pape (Attachment 3)

Positive signs for 2006:
- Early 2006 reports indicate ComSoc membership is down 7.8%, but our renewal rate (at 59%) is up from 2005 (then 55%).
- ComSoc recruited 20% more new members year-to-date – with four member recruitment campaigns ongoing.
- IEL revenue distribution by usage begins this year. Online member subscriptions are nearing 20% of total member subscriptions.
- Sales of DVD sets are satisfactory and Tutorials Now is beginning to see more demand (with over 50 online tutorials).

A “ComSoc member card” will cost ComSoc $40k per year (including ComSoc’s logo on the IEEE card, which would have to be approved by IEEE). This would be a recurring cost for the Society.

Stan and Roberto are investigating ways to increase ComSoc visibility in Xplore/IEL via keyword analysis; for instance, can the selection of key words be managed properly and would this impact search results.

Fred/Harvey are working with John to make Xplore more visible and relevant to conferences. Registrants are given access to Xplore; this benefit will be used for conference promotion.

IEEE Press/John Wiley will publish ComSoc’s “Best of the Best” (outstanding ComSoc journal papers). Pocket Guides and Tutorials on Standards are under investigation.
C. Technical Activities – Sergio Benedetto, Alex Gelman (Attachment 4)

Technical Committees are now grouped into “clusters” to better coordinate TC activities; avoid overlapping/conflicts in charters, areas of interest and conference organization; obtain a more direct link to Meetings & Conferences; and to ease interaction between the VP Technical Activities and TCs (www.comsoc.org/socstr/org/operation/techcom/committees.html).

| Communication Software & Services | CS&S |
| Communications/Signal Processing  | C/SP |
| Networking                        | NET |
| Vertical Issues In Communication Systems | VICS |

After discussions with Len Cimini on Bylaws Article 7.5, Sergio moved “that Emerging Technologies Committee membership be changed as follows: ‘The Committee will have eight members; six will be appointed for three years with one-third appointed each year, and the remaining two will be the current Editors-in-Chief of *JSAC* and *IEEE Communications Magazine.*’” (motion 06:01) Approved; 8 in favor; none opposed. This motion will go to the BoG1 in June for final approval.

As the goal of the new Broadband Over Power Lines TC is to be a focal point for all activities in power line communications, Sergio moved “that the BoG approve changing the name, Broadband Over Power Lines TC, to Power Line Communications Technical Committee.” (motion 06:02) Approved; 8 in favor; none opposed. This change better reflects the goals stated in the committee’s charter and goes on the BoG1 consent agenda for final approval in June.

This year TCs will undergo the recertification process. The Technical Committees Recertification Committee will meet during ICC to finalize the questionnaire and decide the timing of the process (to be concluded year end). Purpose for recertification:

- Confirm active TCs having a critical mass of members; eliminate/merge others;
- Analyze/compare mission statements to emphasize peculiarities/reduce overlapping;
- Create “uniform” presence of TCs in terms of P&P, web sites, etc.
- Focus/coordinate their M&C activities for ComSoc events (via TC clusters)
- Help members achieve promotion to senior/fellow member, etc.

Standards – Alex Gelman

Our Standards Board sponsors and monitors the following existing projects: Spectrum Management, Broadband over Power Lines, and Telephony. Alex is looking to sponsor a new standard, RFID and identify new opportunities.

Alex is requesting $20k this year for volunteer travel and legal fees.

Nim and Alex will launch discussions with IEEE-SA and the Computer Society on ComSoc’s involvement in IEEE 802 Communications Standards, seeking to make ComSoc the “appropriate sponsor”. (action 06:02, new)

D. Membership Development – Byeong Gi Lee (Attachment 5)

Membership Development: is focused on these issues:

- Academia vs. industry – with decreasing industry membership
- USA members versus global memberships – with US membership decreasing.

Initiatives to counter decreases:

- Expand “technical footprint” into new areas (Technical Activities);
- Bundle membership fee with conference fee (Membership Services);
• Influence industry’s top-level management (Marketing/Membership Development).

Membership decreases are reflected in ComSoc’s decreased membership “investment.”
(See slide #9 comparing 2001 investment with 2006 investment.)

Marketing – Bob Shapiro
Bob will increase the number of marketing booths at conferences (25 by year end).
He is working with Curtis and Alex on corporate support for ComSoc membership (50 potential industry partners). Curtis will contact Moshe Kam for an update on IEEE’s Memo of Understanding for corporate (industry) partners and prepare a draft “prospectus” for use in attracting possible IEEE ComSoc patrons in time for BoG1.
(action 06:03, new)

John and Bob are developing an 11-point marketing plan for 2006-07. Bob will reach out to chapters and local companies to promote ComSoc advertising and develop a “corporate leadership award”. (action 06:04, new)

Membership Programs Development – Bob Shapiro (for Shri Goyal)

In efforts to reverse decreasing membership trends, Bob proposed a budget increase for 2006 and 2007. He recommended replacing GCCC with 4 RCCC’s (2 per year at $25k each). A proposal to move the STG program to M&C will take $70k to $100k out of the MPD yearly budget (reference motion 06:03). Shri will bring a proposal to support a budget increase for Membership Programs with backup to BoG1. (action 06:05, new)

E. Society Structure & Governance Committee - Restructure update – Doug Zuckerman (Attachment 6)

Future BoG Restructure approved in 2005 and effective January 2008
VP - Technical Activities
  Director - Education
  Director – Standards
VP - Member Relations
  Director – Membership Programs Development
  Director – Sister & Related Societies
  4 Directors for the 4 geographic regions (AP, EAME, LA, NA)
  Director – Marketing & Industry Relations
VP Publications
  Director – Magazines
  Director – Journals
  Director – On-Line Content
VP Conferences
  Director – Conference Operations
  Director – Conference Development
Reporting structure for Technical Committees, CIO, Treasurer and Standing Committees remains the same as in the present structure.

Larry Greenstein (Bylaws Committee) will present to BoG1 a bylaws draft of Article 3 revising the Society’s organization restructure, with a final draft for approval at BoG2. (action 06:06, new) Policies & Procedures must be rewritten to reflect the reorganized responsibilities of the Vice Presidents.
Nominations & Elections, which begins identifying 2008 vice president nominees this year, must have the VP responsibilities to complete their task in time for ballots to be distributed for the 2007 Election.

F. Society Relations – Roberto Saracco (Attachment 7)

In concert with the Sister Society Board’s on-line “Piazza” (public square) initiative, Roberto will prepare a “frapper-like interface” proposal/business plan for BoG1. (action 06:07, new) He created an initial document--an online community tool for ComSoc and Sister Society members--which he will discuss with ComSoc IT, evaluating cost and architecture of a tool supporting the development of “communities.”

Roberto listed a variety of “perks” for implementation. Working from these “perks” Curtis asked Byeong, Bob, and John to identify all or a subset for follow-up and come to BoG1 with a plan to execute these ideas. (action 06:8, new)

A Summit will be held in conjunction with ICC ’06 to get together to network and initiate joint activities on “information sharing” via ComSoc portal, Sister Society piazza, etc.

G. Membership Services – Harvey Freeman (Attachment 8)

Newly formed TC cluster chairs (4) will represent technical committees on the M&C Board (see 2C).

Best practices policies & procedures will be standardized, published in a booklet, and posted on the Web. Bruce has begun yearly meetings with conference finance chairs; Harvey is considering a similar approach with conference general chairs.

Harvey moved “that the Student Travel Grant Program be moved under Membership Services from Membership Development.” (motion 06:03) An amendment adding “with equitable distribution to be agreed on by a committee with representatives from the M&C Board, Membership Development Council, and two major conference steering committees” failed; 2 in favor; 4 opposed. Original motion: Approved; 5 in favor; 2 against. This will go on the BoG1 consent agenda.

ComSoc’s STG program is not the sole source of student funding for conferences. Placing the program under M&C shifts the focus from Membership Development to conferences. Harvey felt this would energize individual conferences to seek additional industry (patron) funding support. Byeong felt keeping it under Membership Development more effectively meets broader Society interests (beyond just conferences).

Magazines: Optical Communications Supplement and Radio Communications Supplement have both been changed from “Supplement” to “Series” to restore page continuity to IEEE Communications Magazine while still attracting advertisers.

H. Finance – Stan Moyer (Attachment 9)

Stan updated the OpCom on ComSoc’s financial results for 2005, forecasted results for 2006, and preliminary budget for 2007. The Society achieved a 2005 (pre-audit) operating surplus of $470k (compared to a budgeted deficit of $170k). With the addition of market returns and prior-year adjustments, ComSoc added a surplus of over $1.1 million to its reserves. (Society reserves are now over $7.5 million.)

Stan presented highlights and areas needing improvement in comparison to the budget. The surplus in 2005 is the first operating surplus in the last 3 years (since 2002).
Stan also related our recent "watch list" report to TAB FinCom, of which (in summary) TAB FinCom was very pleased with ComSoc's progress. Stan reported the 2006 forecast still at “break even”; however, financial results in some areas are lacking, and some adjustments were needed to put us back on track to achieve our "break-even" goal.

The 2007 budget was presented, asking OpCom to endorse:

- 2007 pricing schedule (e.g. a $2 dues increase to $42)
- significant assumptions, and
- bottom line surplus, which at that time was +$170k.

With no objections from OpCom, this budget will be reviewed during the ComSoc finance meeting, after which Stan will then bring it to BoG1 for approval. Note: Some adjustments to the budget have occurred since OpCom; largely replacing the Global Chapter Congress with two Regional Chapter Chairs Congresses. As a result, the current budget shows ComSoc delivering a surplus of $335k.

I. Ad Hoc Committees – Nim Cheung  (Attachment none)

Nim is forming the following ad hoc committees:

Communications Certification
This committee is chaired by Pierre Perra. Potential funding is expected to come from the IEEE New Initiatives Committee. A report is expected at BoG1.

Operations Review Committee
Nim will reconstitute this committee (chaired by Bill Tranter) to serve as an advisory committee reviewing issues important to the Society. Nim will ask Bill for a brief final report of ORC’s previous activities and for plans moving forward (with deliverables and timelines). He will ask that Bill invite former members to serve with him.

Society Structure & Governance Committee
Nim plans to reconstitute this committee in order to draft new position descriptions for the new organizational structure by OpCom2.

J. Nominations & Elections Committee  - Joe LoCicero --(Attachment 10)

The petition process for the 2006 election followed IEEE Bylaw requirements (2% of first 30,000 voting members, plus 1% of voting members above 30,000). Petition candidate, Doug Zuckerman, met requirements and is on the ballot for President-Elect.

ComSoc Petition Bylaw, 7.9.2, approved last year, conflicted with IEEE policy concerning “facsimiles”--Petition signatures will be accepted in written form, via facsimile (with the original signature to follow), and via the IEEE ComSoc petition web site. Joe will bring the revised motion to the BoG1: “7.9.2 petition signatures will be accepted in written form, with original signatures submitted on a ComSoc petition form, or via the IEEE ComSoc petition web site.” (action 06:9, new)

ComSoc will continue the option of electronic petitioning in the future--either via the IEEE on-line site or the petition button on the ComSoc web site. ComSoc petition forms will follow standard IEEE format. (Joe will bring a copy to BoG1.)

K. Staff & Facilities – Jack Howell  (Attachment 11)
Publications Department reorganized to accommodate the additional journals workload: T-Wireless and the JSAC Part II Supplement. Two free lancers were hired to handle this work. Communications Letters continues to be handled by staff. Sue Lange moved to Pennsylvania and is now telecommuting full-time. Jennifer Porcello was promoted to Publications Coordinator, adding journals tasks to her magazine responsibilities and managing the free lancers.

Staff Time Reporting:
Jack is doing a 4-6 week trial “accounting for staff time” in support of M&C (to confirm the amount/value of staff support versus other sources). Decisions will be made as to what should be counted, level of detail, and if/how the data will be used.

Content Management Tool:
After an extensive RFP, ComSoc selected Eprise for their conference web sites Content Management Tool (CMT). Harvey moved “that OpCom approve purchasing Eprise at $91k (with the server and software capitalized over three years) and $7.8k per year maintenance.” (motion 06:04) Approved; 8 in favor; none opposed. This will go on the BoG1 consent agenda. The use of this tool could dramatically reduce conference technical program website maintenance. (Approval by IEEE may depend on whether the tool can be used as a beta test for all of IEEE.)

Online Magazine for Engineering Practitioner:
Jack moved “that OpCom endorse the online magazine for the engineering practitioner as a 2006 out-of-cycle initiative to begin June 2006 (rather than January 2007).” (motion 06:05) Approved; 8 in favor; none opposed. This will be an on-going, on-line source of timely, hot-topic and technically reviewed articles for engineering practitioners in communications technology.

L. China Magazine Proposal – Nim Cheung (Attachment 12)
China Institute on Communications (CIC) publishes China Communications, the only English language magazine covering the communications industry in China. CIC is offering ComSoc 50-50 % financial co-sponsorship with 50% of the editorial board being ComSoc members. ComSoc would reimburse CIC for $120k annual cost, and ComSoc would sell 8 full pages of advertising per issue (monthly).

With the renewal of our sister-society agreement, ComSoc/CIC can proceed in a joint effort to make this magazine successful. OpCom expressed concerns but the consensus was that Nim should continue discussions. Nim will get back to CIC with a counter offer as appropriate. (action 06:10, new)

M. Nanotechnology Council (NTC) Proposal – Nim Cheung (Attachment none)
Nanotechnology Council approached Nim with a proposal to launch a Nanotechnology Magazine (3-4 issues yearly) to be distribution to all ComSoc members at $2 per member ($80k). Nim will respond in June, but expects to offer $10k (at most) in support of this venture. (action 06:12, new)

3. New Business – Nim Cheung
Brian requested that Park City, Utah, be considered for OpCom as a cost saving measure.

4. Closing Remarks – Nim Cheung, Curtis Siller
Curtis summarized Retreat actions handled during OpCom. Nim made closing comments, thanking members and guests for their participation. Meeting adjourned 5:10 p.m.

5. Future Meetings – Curtis Siller

BoG1: Tuesday (p.m.) 13 June to Wednesday (a.m. – p.m.) 14 June, Istanbul, Turkey.  
OpCom – Monday (a.m.- p.m.) 17 September to Tuesday (a.m.) 18 September TBD  
BoG2 - Wednesday (p.m.) 29 November to Thursday (a.m. – p.m.) 30 November, San Francisco, CA, USA.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Swaim

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Agenda, President-Elect Report
Attachment 2 IEEE, TAB, IEEE Division III
Attachment 3 Marketing
Attachment 4 Technical Activities
Attachment 5 Membership Development
Attachment 6 Society Structure & Governance
Attachment 7 Society Relations
Attachment 8 Membership Services
Attachment 9 Finance
Attachment 10 Nominations & Elections
Attachment 11 Staff & Facilities
Attachment 12 CIC Magazine Proposal

MOTIONS PASSED VIA OPCOM

Emerging Technologies Committee
06:01  “that Emerging Technologies Committee membership be changed as follows: ‘The Committee will have eight members; six will be appointed for three years with one-third appointed each year, and the remaining two will be the current Editors in Chief of JSAC and IEEE Communications Magazine.’”

Power Line Communications Technical Committee
06:02  “that the BoG approve changing the name, Broadband Over Power Lines Technical Committee, to Power Line Communications Technical Committee.”

Student Travel Grant Program
06:03  “that the Student Travel Grant Program be move under Membership Services from Membership Development.”

Content Management Tool
06:04 “that OpCom approve purchasing Eprise at $91K (with the server and software capitalized over three years) and $7.8k per year maintenance.”

**Online Magazine for Engineering Practitioner**

06:05 “that OpCom endorse the online magazine for the engineering practitioner as a 2006 out-of-cycle initiative to begin June 2006 (rather than January 2007).”

**ACTION ITEMS**

06:01 **new:** Curtis will work with Jack on a proposal requesting that IEEE return a proportional amount of the assessments ($5.4M for ComSoc) to the societies.

06:02 **new:** Nim and Alex will launch discussions with IEEE-SA and the Computer Society on ComSoc’s involvement in IEEE 802 Communications Standards, seeking to make ComSoc the “appropriate sponsor”.

06:03 **new:** Curtis will contact Moshe Kam for an update on IEEE’s Memo of Understanding for corporate (industry) partners and prepare a draft “prospectus” for use in attracting possible IEEE ComSoc patrons in time for BoG1.

06:04 **new:** Bob will reach out to chapters and local companies to promote ComSoc advertising and develop a “corporate leadership award”.

06:05 **new:** Shri will bring a proposal supporting a budget increase for Membership Programs with backup to BoG1. *(action 06:05, new)*

06:06 **new:** Larry Greenstein (Bylaws Committee) will present to BoG1 a bylaws draft of Article 3 revising the Society’s organization restructure, with a final draft for approval at BoG2.

06:07 **new:** Roberto will prepare a “frapper like interface” proposal/business plan for BoG1.

06:08 **new:** Byeong, Bob, and John to identify all or a subset of Roberto’s sister-society “perks” for follow-up and come to BoG1 with a plan to execute these ideas.

06:09 **new:** Joe will bring the revised motion to the BoG1: “7.9.2 petition signatures will be accepted in written form, with original signatures submitted on a ComSoc petition form, or via the IEEE ComSoc petition Web site.”

06:10 **new:** Nim will get back to CIC with a counter offer as appropriate on a joint sponsorship effort for *China Communications* magazine.

06:11 **new:** Nim will respond to the Nanotechnology Council on the magazine proposal in June.

**ACTION ITEMS CLOSED**

*(due to little or no action occurring)*

05:20 **closed:** Shri will define strategic interests of our conferences so that technical committees are clear on whether or not they should endorse a particular conference applying for technical co-sponsorship.

05:03 **closed:** Roberto Saracco will work with Doug and Alex identifying mutual values ComSoc could share with Sister Societies in areas of Meetings/Conferences, Member Services, and Technical Activities.

05:02 **closed:** Alex (with Raouf, Doug, Harvey) are looking to link standards initiatives with conferences; Alex will bring a presentation to BoG1.
04:50 closed: CIC requested assistance in producing a magazine in English (abstracts rather than full papers); Naohisa and Roberto Saracco will bring a proposal to CIC in January.

04:47 closed: Celia will follow up a request from Latin America to rewrite into Spanish an abstract of an article taken from IEEE Communications Magazine; Celia will check copyright issues with IEEE and bring a proposal for implementation to the Board.

04:45 closed: Shri, Roberto de Marca, Jack: Roberto/Jack will check on IEEE constraints regarding any “return of value” from ComSoc non-financially sponsored conferences. Shri will evaluate from an M&C standpoint and investigate the possibility of conference author posting (Roberto will check IEEE issues). And report to BoG2 2004. *Shri is seeking potential revenue sources - charging fees for non-financially co-sponsored conferences.*

04:38 closed: Alex (with Nim/Curtis) will proceed with the further steps in building ComSoc presence in India.

04:36 closed: Shri will investigate an occurrence at MILCOM of a non-USA individual being prohibited from the organizing committee; he will report to the Board.

04:32 closed: Bill, Roberto de Marca, and Shri will redraft the hotel negotiation motion (04:17) and bring to BoG2 2004.

04:20 closed: Nim and Naohisa will ask IEEE to consider extending IEEE Financial Package to Sister Societies.

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