

Memorial Day to Fourth of July - The Birth Story of a new CPMT Chapter

Eric Perfecto, CPMT Chapter and Membership Director, interviews Sam Karikalan, the new CPMT Orange County Chapter Chair

Background: CPMT membership is growing; there is a real opportunity to organize new chapters to address the needs of local members by providing technical growth and networking.

Eric: What inspired you to organizing a CPMT chapter?

Sam: First of all, my sincere thanks to you, Eric, for giving me this opportunity to tell everyone this Birth Story of our new CPMT Chapter in Orange County, California.

The most important thing that inspired me to work on organizing this new CPMT Chapter is my personal experience of the benefits that regional technical meetings can bring to individual members. These local meetings are different from the annual conferences, in the sense that they are focused on one particular topic at a time, need only an hour or two of your time and do not need you to travel for enjoying the technical enrichment and networking benefits of CPMT. Also, these local meetings happen more frequently, which helps members to remain in touch with their community all the time.

While living in Arizona, until mid-2009, I had the opportunity to interact with the large CPMT community in the Phoenix area. The CPMT Phoenix Chapter and the IEEE Phoenix Section were very vibrant, with many meetings, workshops and banquets, and I had the honor of serving on the Executive Committees of both these great organizations, in several different capacities such as the Program Chair and the Publicity Chair. When I had to relocate to Orange County, California for work related reasons in 2009, the absence of a local CPMT chapter and its monthly technical meetings in Orange County area seemed to push me in a professional networking vacuum. This made me to start seriously thinking about forming a new chapter of CPMT in Orange County. I thought there might be many people in this area who might be feeling the same way that I did.

Eric: Why not just create an affiliate CPMT chapter to an existing IEEE Society chapter in Orange County?

Sam: The first thing that I did, with this chapter formation effort, was to obtain the list of current CPMT members in the Orange County area from Marsha Tickman, the Executive Director of CPMT. I was elated to see that we had four IEEE Fellows, four Life Members and three Senior Members on that list, which immediately boosted my confidence on the possibility of having our own Chapter. With a membership that is so well accomplished and with many semiconductor companies in the area with large and small Package Engineering groups of their own, I never even thought of an

affiliate chapter and started working straightaway on the petition for a separate CPMT chapter, here in Orange County. I always had the feeling that this Chapter has the potential to grow into a very big and active Chapter of CPMT and play an important role at the national and international level as well, for supporting CPMT's mission.

Eric: How far away was the nearest CPMT chapter, before the CPMT OC Chapter became a reality?

Sam: The nearest CPMT chapter for us was about 90 miles away in San Diego, CA. Driving to the meetings of that chapter every time might have been challenging and discouraging for those in the Orange County area.

Eric: Can you describe the process and issues that you encountered in certifying the new IEEE CPMT chapter?

Sam: Sure. As any chapter of a Technical Society of the IEEE is attached to a particular IEEE Section at the Regional level and is governed by the by-laws of that Section, we had to submit a petition to the Orange County Section of the IEEE and the IEEE Membership and Geographic Activities (MGA) Board on the formation of our IEEE CPMT OC Chapter. The following are the key milestones in this petition and approval process for us:

1. Gather our members:

The petition (http://www.ieee.org/documents/chapter_petition.doc) to form a new CPMT Chapter needed to be signed by at least 12 members of CPMT Society, affiliated to the Orange County Section, with "Member" Grade or above. So, the first step for me was to send an e-mail to the existing CPMT membership in the OC Section, presenting the idea of starting our own Chapter and asking them to co-sign the petition. It may also help to ask around at one's work place in person and recruit new members, if needed, as this might expedite the process of reaching the magic number of 12.

2. Petition paper work:

E-mails are accepted by the IEEE MGA as proof of signature on the petition. So, there is no need for every single petitioner to physically sign the petition form. Instead, an e-mail with the details such as the Member name, IEEE Member number, the IEEE Section name and the proposed IEEE Chapter's name, along with a statement such as "I, as a member of the above Society and Section, hereby petition for approval to form a Chapter in the Section indicated above", from a petitioner is sufficient. The full name of the petitioner and contact address needs to be added to that e-mail as a signature. All these e-mail signatures need to be

recorded on the petition form, with a note such as "E-mail attached" in the "Signature" Column, along with the signatures that were physically obtained on the petition form, before submitting it to the local IEEE Section's Executive Committee for approval.

3. Once the local IEEE Section Executive Committee approves the petition, it is taken up by the IEEE MGA for verification of the signatures and submitted for approval by the respective Region Director of the IEEE and the President of the Technical Society.
4. Upon receiving all such approvals, the MGA Administration will communicate the formation of the new Chapter to the person identified as the "Organizer of the Chapter" on the petition form.

We were fortunate not to encounter any major issues in this entire process. Marsha Tickman, the Executive Director of the CPMT, was always there to guide us through, including bringing our petition to the attention of some of the key members of our community and asking for their signatures on the petition. Alvin Joseph, the IEEE OC Section Chair, was very supportive of our efforts on this Chapter formation, and helped us to move the petition through the Section's approval chain quickly. In your position as the CPMT Chapter and Membership Director, Eric, you were such a great inspiration and help as well, through this entire process.

Eric: Thanks, Sam. How long did the whole process take?

Sam: My first exploratory e-mail to our membership went out on the Friday before the Memorial Day Weekend this year. With support e-mails flowing in almost immediately in reply, we had 15 signatories for the petition by June 10th and we submitted our petition to the IEEE OC Section Executive Committee on the same day. In the mean time, the 61st ECTC in Lake Buena Vista, FL, also helped me to meet with Don Frye and Prof. Chin C Lee from UCI, my fellow petitioners, and other like-minded people in person and gather their support as well.

With the IEEE OC Section approval in our hand on June 13th, Marsha Tickman forwarded the paperwork to the IEEE MGA on the same day. After the signature verifications were done, Joe Hale, the Geographic Unit Support Administrator at the MGA, forwarded the formation request to Edward Perkins, the Region 6 Director of the IEEE, and Rolf Aschenbrenner, the CPMT President, on June 21st. Edward and Rolf, were kind to give their approvals quickly, such that we received the note on the final approval of this new chapter from Cecilia Jankowski, the Managing Director of the IEEE MGA, on June 29th. The effective date of the formation of our Chapter was June 24, 2011.

So, everything on this new Chapter formation process unfolded so quickly and the approval process was executed so efficiently at the IEEE OC Section, CPMT and the MGA, such that the whole process took only about five weeks. What started by the Memorial Day Weekend all ended in a Very Happy note for all of us at the IEEE CPMT OC Chapter, by the Fourth of July Weekend.

Eric: What support have you received from CPMT and the IEEE section?

Sam: Besides being the guiding force through the formation phase of our Chapter, the CPMT and the IEEE OC Section have also promised seed funding to our baby chapter, to get started with our technical activities. With their support, we already have had two administrative meetings, elected our own Executive Committee, have an Activity Plan in place and are ready to start with our monthly Technical Meeting series in September this year. All this wouldn't have been possible without the strong support that we received from the CPMT and the IEEE OC Section.

Eric: Do you have a chapter web page?

Sam: Yes, we do. Our URL is <http://sites.ieee.org/ocs-cpmt>. This site is still evolving and our Publicity Chair is working hard to keep this site up to date and informative. We also have a LinkedIn Group, called "IEEE CPMT OC Chapter. (http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3996387&trk=hb_side_g), where we invite non-IEEE members also to join and stay informed on our activities.

Eric: Are you planning to take advantage of the Distinguished Lecture program?

Sam: Yes. Thanks to you, Eric, for introducing us to Kitty Pearsall, the Distinguished Lecture (DL) Program Coordinator and VP of Education at CPMT. The DL Program (<http://www.cpmc.org/education/dl.html>) has an impressive list of experts who can be invited by us for technical talks at our meetings and their travel expenses may be covered by the CPMT, if needed. This is a great service by the CPMT to the local chapters and we will definitely take advantage of this program.

Eric: Any other comments that can help regional members that are considering establishing a new CPMT chapter?

Sam: The new chapter formation effort was a very pleasant experience for us, due to the efficiency and professionalism with which the petition process was handled at the IEEE.

To those of my colleagues at CPMT Society worldwide, who are thinking about starting their own chapters at the local level, I would like to say "Congrats! You have taken

the right first step in making full use of your IEEE membership and bringing all its benefits to you and fellow members in your region.”

For those who are wondering on how to gather the 12 signatures needed for the petition, my recommendation would be “Go out and talk or e-mail to your fellow members in your section. You will be surprised to see there are so many of them who are feeling the same way as you do on the lack of technical activities at the local level”.

My final advice would be “Feel free to ask for help from the CPMT and your local Section. They will be very glad to support in whatever way they can”.

I also have a request to all of them and all the Chapters that already exist. Our IEEE CPMT Orange County Chapter needs your help, to keep our Technical Program active and vibrant. Kindly contact me at samkarikalan@ieee.org, if you have any advice, feedback or proposals for joint activities. We are also looking for experts to speak at our technical meetings. So, if you happen to be in the Orange County, California area or in the Greater Los Angeles area, and have the time to visit us, please let me know. We will invite you for a technical talk to our membership.

Eric: Thank you for agreeing to this interview - to me it shows the power of one person.

Sam: Thanks for the kind words, Eric. I would rather call this the power of team work. I was fortunate to have the immediate support of my fellow petitioners and I would like to recognize them individually in this interview. Thanks to Mehdi Saeidi, Pen Jin, Jianjun Li, Fan Yeung, Tim Chaudhry (all from Broadcom), Christoph Luechinger (K&S), Chuck Hirbour (Technic), Robert Warren (Conexant), Ralph W. Farrington (RWF Consulting), Jianfeng Xu (International Rectifier), Prof. Chin C Lee, Prof. Frank G. Shi (both from UCI), Wei Koh (Pacrim Technologies) and Don Frye (Henkel) for taking the initiative to sign the petition and be the founding members of our Chapter.

I am also grateful to the Executive Management of my company, Broadcom Corporation, for their kind support to our Chapter and their approval to use the company premises for our meetings.

Finally, I am blessed to have a wonderful team at our Executive Committee which, I believe, can pull off great feats together.

Thanks to you, again, for the opportunity to tell everyone our story!



IEEE CPMT OC Chapter Executive Committee: From Left to Right: Jianjun Li (Secretary), Mehdi Saeidi (Technical Program Co-chair), Wei Koh (Technical Program Chair), Don Frye (Vice-Chair), Tim Chaudhry (Treasurer), Sam Karikalan (Chair), Larry Williams (Workshop Chair), Michael Alderete (Membership Chair) and Jianfeng Xu (Publicity Chair)