

OMTG - History

The Group was originally founded in the 1985 to 1987 timeframe by the SPIE (Society of Photo-optical Instrument Engineers, Bellingham, WA) to cultivate and encourage the various non-optical arts that are occasionally valuable in the successful construction of optical instruments. The initiative was pressed by Roger Riess (then working for Aerojet General, Azusa, CA) during the SPIE presidency of Lou Larmore. An organizing committee was formed consisting of Roger Riess, Paul Yoder, Dan Vukobratovich, Don O'Shea and Al Hatheway. A petition was submitted to the Board of Governors of SPIE and accepted the following year, founding the association as a "Technical Group" under the umbrella of the SPIE non-profit corporate status.

The chairmen of the Group since its inception have been Roger Riess (1985 to 1989), Daniel Vukobratovich (1989 to 1992) and Al Hatheway (1992 to the present). The principal activities of the Group have been:

1. An annual meeting one evening (usually on Tuesday) during SPIE's Optics and Photonics Symposium in San Diego, CA, featuring a speaker on some topic of interest to the optomechanical community (followed by a "Problems-and-Solutions Workshop") and
2. A biennial conference in odd-numbered years (2009 will be next) featuring 30 to 50 technical papers presented over two days, bound into a single volume and published by SPIE.

In 2006 the Board of Directors (nee: Governors) of SPIE voted to disband its structure of Technical Groups worldwide. This Group was one among many others (perhaps 15) that were simultaneously disbanded by SPIE effective May 1, 2007. As a practical matter this only meant that they would no longer keep track of Group membership nor would they maintain a list of current members.

Conversations with the staff of SPIE indicate that they are very interested in continuing our biennial conference and will support it during the Optics and Photonics Symposium in alternate summers (odd-numbered year). Furthermore, they are willing to provide us a meeting room one evening annually during the Optics and Photonics Symposium for our annual gathering.