



MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Thursday, August 10, 2006, network at 6:30, dinner (optional) at 7:00 PM, presentation at 8:00 PM.

Denny's Restaurant
3315 N. Scottsdale Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Vaughn Treude

At the moment, I'm on the road, visiting family and friends in scenic North Dakota. Luckily I've discovered the Badlands Brew, a little coffee shop here in Dickinson that has free high-speed wireless access. Of course it's not the only free wi-fi in town, but it probably has the best ambiance. It's a converted frontier-era Episcopalian church. Teddy Roosevelt attended services there back in territorial days. Anyway, this little place has made it easier to keep in touch while I'm in ND.

For the last couple of months, I have been insanely busy. This is why, despite enlisting the help of several of you on the Executive Board to find speakers for future meetings, I haven't yet gotten beyond the current month in publicizing them. So

please bear with me. I hope to catch up next month.

At last month's PACN meeting, Lane Garrett gave a talk about his new business venture in Deming, New Mexico. The announcement drew a lot of interest, and we had better than usual attendance. It's a very ambitious project, and will create the world's largest solar-power plant. This is something our country needs desperately. With the latest troubles in the Middle East, it seems even more likely that oil prices will increase dramatically. It's encouraging to see entrepreneurs stepping up to the alternative-energy plate.

I'm also glad to see the IEEE-USA taking our interests to Congress about the H-1B visa issue. You may have received some updates from national headquarters to that effect. The discouraging thing is that the government has actually been increasing the ceiling on of H-1B visas, rather than doing what they should – scrapping the whole program. It's typical these days – kowtowing to the short-term interests of giant corporations against the long-term interests of the nation. Why should young people go into engineering when our own (alleged) representatives are working so hard to undercut our wages?

Lately I've been seeing an occasional on-

line reference to a thing called a “Slingbox.” Due to my hectic schedule I hadn't actually checked it out until recently. If you're familiar with the controversy surrounding TiVo, the Slingbox has the potential to be even more revolutionary. The TiVo enables time-shifting of television programming, which video recorders have been doing for decades – except that it makes it much easier to skip commercials. In contrast, the Slingbox does place-shifting – it allows you to send a video stream from your home to some other location via the Internet. This allows people to watch their cable or satellite programs while on the road. The device retails around \$250, and unlike TiVo, it has no subscription fees. According to July 26th article on arstechnica.com, content providers such as HBO have claimed this is a copyright violation, but have not yet taken any action. We can expect sports franchises to go ballistic about this, since it defeats the practice of location-based blackouts of games. So if this sounds appealing to you, you should buy one while you can. As far as I know, the device requires Windows XP on the receiving side, which to me is a significant drawback. Still, I like the idea of a product that is so subversive and so threatening to the powers that be. (Too bad I don't have cable!)

I'll be back in town for the August meeting, which features Karen Katzorke of ASU Technopolis. She will be speaking on her organization's role in “Educating, Coaching and Collecting Innovators and Entrepreneurs.” Hope to see you there!

Vaughn Treude

EDITOR 'S MESSAGE

by Clark Jones

You're getting this month's edition of *The Advisor* even earlier than last month's edition because I'm going on a “road trip”. While you guys are enjoying the fine cuisine at Denny's, I'll probably be having to settle for the chow at one of the restaurants at one of the Disney resort hotels in Orlando. I'll be attending the Mensa “World Gathering”. As of June 21, nearly 2000 people had registered.

I have a somewhat different viewpoint on the H1-B issue than Vaughn does. I recall what happened to the steel industry in this country, where the management kept giving in to the unions on ever higher wage and benefit demands, rather than putting resources into modernizing the plants. The situation got so bad that Japan, which has to import both the coal AND the iron ore (not to mention having to be much more frugal with the water), was able to undersell the American steel industry on world markets to the point of essentially eliminating the American steel industry. The same thing is happening in the auto industry – yeah, UAW members get high wages when they have jobs, but a very large number have been “RIFed”. I'd rather see the foreign engineers come here to work than the companies simply “offshoring” the work. Remember, the cost of living is much higher anywhere in the U.S. than it is in, say, Bangladesh, so they'll have to pay the engineer a lot more if he's in the U.S. than if he's living in Bangladesh. Plus, what that Bangladeshi engineer spends on food,

housing, and “doodads” at least provides for further employment for U.S. sales folk, warehouse workers, and others.

On the idea of the Slingbox, my understanding is that it not only does video sources, but can also connect to your stereo so that you can listen to your favorite radio station anywhere in the world. One of the potential issues that I see is that certain broadband ISPs (pronounced “Cox”) are very picky about anything resembling a “server” on a “home” account. (It's fairly well known that Cox routinely “portscans” its broadband customers, unless you have the far more expensive “Cox@Work” service.) My impression of the Slingbox is that it is basically just a combination of a video capture board, a sound card, a network interface, and appropriate software into a “toaster” box that the general public can understand and use. If you were really interested in doing it, and willing to spend a little time, you could probably find the right software to get a Linux box with an “All-In-Wonder” video card to do the same thing. (It seems to me that there's a fair chance that the Slingbox actually runs Linux inside. I know that TiVo does.)

Speaking of TiVo, I've heard that TiVo is going to provide (for a fee, of course) advertisers statistical info on what commercials users skip over versus which ones they actually watch. I find that maybe once or twice a week, I'll see something that looks new and interesting, and play a commercial at normal speed. Generally, though, I fast forward over the vast majority. Many are for products for which I have no use, and so many are repeated WAY too often. If TiVo's selling statistical info leads to better advertising practices, then I'm all for it.

There have also been rumors of getting laws passed that would require a technological imparement of the ability to fast forward over commercials. In my (not so) humble opinion, this would essentially kill commercial TV.

I won't see you on August 10th, but I will see you on September 14th at the PACN meeting!

Clark Jones

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IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network August Meeting: ASU Technopolis - Educating, Coaching and Collecting Innovators and Entrepreneurs

Date: Thursday, August 10, 2006

Time: Networking begins at 6:30 PM

Dinner begins at 7:00 PM

Program starts at 8:00 PM

Place: Denny's Restaurant

3315 N. Scottsdale Rd. (at Osborn)

Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

Abstract: This month's speaker will be Karen Katzorke, who has been with ASU Technopolis since the summer of 2004 as Program Manager, and is responsible for the planning and execution of programs and events. Karen previously worked as Program Manager of Entrepreneurial Services at the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, where she coordinated entrepreneurial programs and provided organization and promotion for the Arizona Venture Capital Conference. She is experienced with early to mid-stage life science and technology entrepreneurs, assisting companies with access to capital and other expansion and growth needs. Karen has more than 5 years of economic development experience, which includes the Greater Phoenix Chamber and the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.

For more information, contact Vaughn Treude, vaughn@nakota-software.com, or see the IEEE PACN website, ieeepacn.com.

**IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network
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Membership is available to anyone who is interested in the goals of the organization. Full membership entitles a member to voting privileges at business meetings, and to a web site listing. Associate members are not listed and do not vote, but receive all mailings. Note that the newsletter is distributed via e-mail.

I hereby apply for (full____ associate____) membership in the IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network.

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