



## MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Denny's Restaurant  
3315 N. Scottsdale Road (at Osborn)  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Meeting times:

Date: Thursday, June 14, 2007  
Networking begins at 6:30 PM  
Dinner begins at 7:00 PM  
Program starts at 8:00 PM

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Vaughn Treude

I've been an active member of the PACN for over ten years, and this may have been the first time I've had to miss the annual picnic. I expect it was a good one as usual. I couldn't attend because I was in Hsinchu, Taiwan, on business. It was an interesting trip.

Taiwan is a very modern place, but still culturally quite different from the US. Hsinchu is only about 70 km from the capital, Taipei, and not nearly as big – just under 400,000 people, a small city by Asian standards. It has the distinction of being home to Taiwan's Silicon Valley, better known as the Hsinchu Science Park. This place has facilities from numerous major companies, such as TSMC (Taiwan

Semiconductor), LiteOn, Philips, SiS, Winbond, Logitech, and many others. Before the electronic age, Hsinchu was one of world's largest centers of glass manufacturing. Since glass is also composed primarily of silicon, that seems like a natural transition.

The summer weather is not nearly as hot as in Arizona, but quite humid, with a constant smoggy haze in the sky. The biggest difference, besides the language, is the crowding. The city is very dense. Buildings are taller and much closer together than they are here. I went to a department store that was about 15 stories tall, each floor was no bigger than a typical restaurant in Phoenix.

As you would expect, parking is a problem in Hsinchu. A large proportion of the people ride motor-scooters (Vespas and that sort of thing) rather than driving cars. Scooters have right-of-way over larger vehicles; at each traffic light there's an area in front reserved for them, and they sneak past on both the right and left when the light is red. They're parked practically everywhere, in front of every building and on many sidewalks, which means pedestrians often end up walking in traffic. At least the traffic goes a lot slower than Phoenix traffic, due to the congestion.

My task was software integration for a silicon wafer prober. I was there for 10 days and had some time for sightseeing. The people were friendly, and many spoke English. I had no problem communicating with the employees at my hotel, as well as the Keithley engineers I was working with. But when I ventured into town it was much more difficult. I had a Chinese phrasebook but my pronunciation was abysmal, so I relied heavily on gestures. I also discovered most of the handful of pubs where Westerners hang out. Most of the foreigners there were either engineers or English teachers. In fact, there are so many young adults (mostly women) teaching English that they've formed their own soccer league – a thing I discovered when two young blonds approached me selling raffle tickets for their team.

Since I'm back in Phoenix, I'll be attending the June meeting, and the speaker will be yours truly. I will be giving a presentation on gEDA, the GPL (Gnu Public License) Electronic Design Automation package, which I used in one of my recent projects. This is a suite of free, open source applications that rivals commercial packages costing thousands of dollars. Currently it is only available for Linux and Macintosh – sorry, Microsoft users – but since the source code is open, it can be ported to Windows as soon as we have a volunteer willing to do it. I'm not a very impartial judge of the presentation, but I will say this: Since this is an electronic design package, it's a very appropriate topic for an IEEE meeting.

Hope to see you all there!

Vaughn

## **EDITOR'S MESSAGE**

**by Clark Jones**

Hmm... with Vaughn's description of the English teachers, maybe I should try going to Taiwan to find a girlfriend!

The big thing in my life since the last edition of *The Advisor* is that the results for the national elections in Mensa have come out. (They happened to come out on the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of D-Day Europe – I hope that it's merely a coincidence and not an omen!) Anyway, I won the office of “Regional Vice Chairman for Region 9”, or “RVC9” for short. (My predecessor in the office has been in Iraq as a civilian contractor since mid-May, so I've also been appointed as “interim RVC9” for the last few weeks of the old term.)

To explain a little, American Mensa has divided the country into ten regions (Region 9 being AZ, UT, southern NV, southern CA, and HI), with an RVC from each. The RVCs, along with a Secretary, a Treasurer, Second Vice Chairman, First Vice Chairman, Chairman, and two immediately past Chairmen, constitute the Board of Directors., which (along with several “non-voting” officers) is officially called the “American Mensa Committee”, or “AMC” for short.

The job of RVC9 has already started keeping me pretty busy, with a LOT of stuff to read, getting a column out to the newsletters of the 12 “local groups” in Region 9, etc.

I'll be having to attend several meetings in the two-year term, and I already know that at least some of them are going to conflict with PACN meetings.

It would really help me if someone could take over being editor of *The Advisor*. It really isn't all that difficult – most months you need to remind the President to get you his column, and then proof read it (especially when he's been off picking up a Chinese accent!). Spell checkers can help,

and I've been using Open Office Writer for years now because it includes the ability of generating a PDF file (and it's free). All in all, it generally only takes an hour or two, including dealing with requests to be added/deleted from the mailing list.

Oh, yes: it was suggested at the picnic that we change to having it in April next year, so it won't be so hot outdoors.

Clark Jones

### Contact Info

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PACN Website: <http://www.ieeepacn.com>

## **IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network June Meeting: gEDA – a Free, Open-Source Electronic Design Package**

**Date:** Thursday, June 14th, 2007

**Time:** Networking begins at 6:30 pm

Dinner begins at 7:00 pm

Program starts at 8:00 pm

**Place:** (Note change of location from last earlier this year.)

Denny's Restaurant

3315 N. Scottsdale Rd. (at Osborn)

Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

**Abstract:** Vaughn Treude, president of Nakota Software, Inc., will give an overview and demonstration of the gEDA package, a tool suite which makes electronic design automation affordable for the average person. The gEDA software is powerful and can be very useful for the hobbyist as well as the independent consultant.

For more information, contact Vaughn Treude, [vaughn@nakota-software.com](mailto:vaughn@nakota-software.com), or see the IEEE PACN website, [ieeepacn.com](http://ieeepacn.com).

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**IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network  
Membership Application Form**

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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