

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Advisor is late this month because I have been buried and have been quite tardy in writing my monthly message. Vaughn is filling in as editor this month while Mr. Jones is enjoying the pleasures of Australia, at company expense I might add. In any case Vaughn has been very patient with me, something I greatly appreciate. A byproduct is a shorter than usual epistle from me, and I expect that it will be widely appreciated.

Our December meeting is the annual business meeting and roundtable discussion on the state of the Network. The meeting will be held as usual on the second Thursday at Monti's. Elections will be held to fill the seats for the two expiring terms on the Executive Board. The Board nominated Bruce Johnson and Eli Kawam for the two positions. Bruce is our past president and chaired the organizing committee for last month's Workshop. Eli has stepped forward and is prepared to take an active roll in the Network's activities. As I mentioned last month, Russ Johnson has decided not to continue on the Board after many years of service. Additional nominations will be solicited from the floor so if anyone is interested in serving on the Board please raise your hand.

The election will be the primary piece of formal business we will have to take care of. Following that we will have a free and open discussion of the state of our Network and what we can do to better serve our members and widen the Network's appeal. We do this every year, and it is probably our best opportunity to get really productive input from everyone. Please come and take an active role in the discussion.

We held the 2002 Phoenix Consultants Workshop last month at the Hilton Airport East Hotel in Mesa (a little bit far to the east to be called an airport hotel, I think). The presentations by a wide variety of speakers from across the country were excellent and very beneficial to all who were there. We also had several excellent talks from local speakers including our own Jim Soudriette and Lane Garrett. Attendance was in the mid twenties and was a little less than we had hoped. But it was really worth the time for those who did attend. Overall, the Workshop was a great success.

We are just now getting the programs set up for next year. We have speakers identified for the first half of the year, but we haven't sorted out the order

yet. We will probably have that done by next week's meeting and will announce it then.

In any case, I will see you on the evening of December 12.

Paul Everett.

GUEST EDITORIAL

I recently received a mailing from the IEEE Computer Society (of which I'm a longtime member) about the society's new certification program for software engineers. Good idea, I thought – not that I have time to pursue it at the moment. But I got to wondering – what's the Society's agenda? Are they pushing for mandatory state-run professional licensing, like so many professional societies do?

If that was the case, I'd have to be strenuously opposed. Despite all the positive things that were said at our previous workshop about the PE (Professional Engineering) registration, it's got one major drawback: the government does it. As such, it's (a) run less efficiently than a free-market alternative, and (b) is subject to political machinations that don't serve the profession or the consumer.

I'm not an economist nor a professional journalist, so I'll refer you to some resources on the Internet. On a site called *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, you'll find an article by S.D. Young entitled "Occupational Licensing." In it, he argues that licensing is primarily driven by professional groups to decrease competition, that it increases costs to the consumer, and it does not improve quality of service. The reason for this last assertion is that licensing boards tend to serve the interests of the profession, sometimes actively hiding problems complaints from the public. The URL for this article is:

www.econlib.org/library/Enc/OccupationalLicensing.html.

Another worthwhile article is "The Cartelization of the American Workforce", by James Bovard. He makes similar points, but concentrates on the negative effects on freedom and the ability of ordinary Americans to earn a living. His article can be found at: www.fff.org/freedom/1096d.asp

In any case, I expect once that the Computer Society has created a standard for software engineering competence, many state legislatures will rush to regulate. I hope that we as an organization will have the strength to say, "No way!"

Vaughn L. Treude, Software Non-engineer