

Newsletter of the
Area Consultants
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The Advisor A

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Network

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Paul Everett

Our meeting this month will be held on Thursday, July 10 at Monti's La Casa Vieja at the southwest corner of Mill Ave and Rio Salado Parkway in Tempe. Networking and the social hour begin at 6:30 with dinner starting about 7 PM. Lane Garrett is going to tell us about "Electric Windmills". Lane is one of the founding members of the Network and has been a moving force in the renewable energy field for many years. His presentation should start a bit after 8. Come then if you just want to hear Lane's talk and skip dinner.

Last month Bruce Johnson presented the results from the recent national survey on the rates consultants charge, gross income etc. The information was very enlightening to those of us who are actively participating in this business as well as to those who are thinking about getting involved. The bottom line is that you can make a good living as a consultant if you are serious about it. It takes a while to get established, but if you're willing to work at it, you can make it. If you want to keep your day job and do a little consulting on the side, you can still pick up some serious pocket money. However, it is a lot harder to keep your focus and be serious about your work if it is just a sideline. I have observed over the years that the consultants who are in

the business full
time are very

serious about doing good work and getting it done on time, more so than the part-timers who are not really financially dependent on their consulting activities. At least that has been my experience. If a consultant, part time or full time, is willing to work hard and do a good job for his customers, he can be very successful. A part-timer can do well if he provides good service and keeps his customers happy. Marketing is a bit harder for a part-timer since he is usually not there to answer the phone when the call comes. One way to get around this is to have a phone line dedicated to your consulting business with an answering machine with a business oriented OGM (out going message). Customers usually don't have a problem with a return call the next day. Most customers will not have a problem using a part-timer as long as he thinks he will get quality work completed when he wants it completed. Things are looking good for consultants these days since companies are doing more and more outsourcing so that they don't have to carry the expense of maintaining an in-house capability that is not needed on a continuous basis. This provides fertile ground for the independently employed both full and part time. In fact part-timers have something of an advantage since their day jobs often validate their capabilities in the customers' eyes. Part-timers, however, must be very careful to avoid even a hint of conflict of interest. It just

is not worth it. The customer, by the way, won't touch you with a ten foot pole if he thinks there is any chance of conflict of interest. If you get into trouble so does the customer, and he certainly doesn't want that liability. At least you shouldn't want to work for anyone who doesn't have that attitude.

Attendance at last month's meeting was 14, down from the 22 or so we had the previous couple of months. This is probably because we have entered the summer months when attendance usually falls off a bit with people going off on a trip somewhere or having some other activity. Attendance at our meetings has been steadily increasing, and I think we all hope that trend continues. Let's hope we break 30 in the fall. The increase in meal cost may have had something to do with it as well. But all good things have to end sometime, and we had to reduce the meal subsidy. Its purpose was to return some of the excess in the treasury to the members, and it looks like it did what it was supposed to do. With new members coming in and paying their dues the treasury was actually growing for awhile. But with the increasing attendance, things caught up with us, and the treasury dropped by 50% over a few months. We had no choice but to raise the meal cost to nearly the actual cost to keep solvent. I hope the members will still consider it a good deal and continue to support the Network with their attendance. I know I think it is well worth it.

The programs for the rest of the year are:

- July – Lane Garrett on “Electric Windmills”
- August – David Douthit will talk

on "COTS, Contamination, and Contracts;

a Critical Combination". David joined the Network last year and is a quality expert.

- September – Jim Soudriette and John Barnabas will have “A dialog on New Technologies”. Jim is a management consultant and a member of the Network. John is a long time associate of Jim and has attended our meetings on more than one occasion. Anything Jim does is going to be fun, and this promises to be no exception.
- October – Chuck Ptasek will talk about “Business Intelligence”. Chuck is president of Charles, Charles and Associates and business intelligence is his area of expertise.
- November – New member Praba Kumarakulasingam is going to present a technical talk on his recent work. We haven't settled on a title yet but will let you know what it is in the near future.
- December – This is our annual business meeting and roundtable discussion. We will have the elections for the Board. Then we have an open discussion of where the PACN is and where it ought to go. This is where we set the policy that the Board implements over the next year. Make sure you get your two cents worth in.

If you haven't yet paid your 2003 dues, it is getting awfully late so please do so now. Send a check to

William D. Morgan
Treasurer, IEEE PACN

23 E. Fairmount Drive
Tempe AZ 85282

The dues are cheap, and think of all of the benefits you get from belonging to this fine organization. The regular membership dues for IEEE members are \$25/yr. If you are not an IEEE member, the cost is \$30/yr. The IEEE requires a difference in the two categories. Associate membership is available to those who are not actively engaged in engineering, and the associate member dues are \$20/yr. When you pay your dues, Vaughn and Bruce will make a nice laminated name badge with 2003 prominently displayed. The badges are supposed to be worn at all of our meetings so please remember to bring it each time.

If you haven't done so already, please put your resumes together and send them to Vaughn so that he can post them on the web site. His email address is vaughn@nakota-software.com. Our web site is steadily improving, but we need your help. This is a free marketing tool that the Network provides to its members. The more participants we have the more effective it is. So get your resume posted and help everyone, most of all yourself.

We will again have the Board meeting at ETA Engineering prior to the dinner meeting. The Board meeting starts about 5 PM and winds up a little after 6. Any member is welcome to attend, but let me know if you are going to be there so we can make sure there is a place for you to sit. Just send me an email at peverett@everettinfrared.com.

Check out our web site at <http://www.ieeepacn.com>.

See you on the second Thursday.

Paul

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

by Clark Jones

I want to apologize about *The Advisor* being late this month. You may recall that I'm a "regular employee", and management has gone into "panic mode" to get the next generation of machines out. I'm supposed to be part time, but they seem to have a problem understanding that. Fortunately I only had to work 3.5 hours on July 4th, though my boss's boss's boss called me at about 6:30 AM to ask me to go in. (I had stayed up late expecting to be able to sleep in.) Unfortunately, I'm "salaried exempt", so I don't get overtime.

Paul was a bit late in getting his column to me, but it really wouldn't have mattered. The last weekend in June is the annual ham radio "Field Day", when we drag radios and ourselves out into the boonies to see how many contacts we can make in a 24 hour period. It's fun, nice to see old friends, and, best of all, a great excuse to get out of the Valley's heat for a weekend. Since it's date is set by someone else, it also made a good excuse to at least not work one weekend!

Major news about my employer is that my part of the company is going to be bought by a major "venture capital" firm based in San Francisco. I definitely have mixed feelings about it.

Sometimes, though, we tend to lose sight of the wonderful world we live in, and how much it has changed, mostly for the better, even in our lifetimes. I remember when I was growing up in the 1960s, in a town of about 50,000 people, hearing of someone who had been to Australia. I never got to meet him, but I had heard of him. And now, less than 40 years later, I've been there three times myself, and am making plans for a fourth trip. And, on top of that, I frequently read tomorrow's edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* on-line (<http://www.smh.com.au>) while waiting for the computer on my desk to complete some task – a computer that would have been considered a "supercomputer" back in the 1960s. Back in the 1960s, my family had only one TV set – a black and white one, that

didn't even have a UHF tuner. The color monitor that I'm using to write this newsletter has a resolution of 1280x1024 – that old black and white TV would have been less than half that in each direction. Additionally, this monitor has a TV tuner built in that not only does both VHF and UHF, it will also adapt automatically to most standards around the world, plus it has stereo sound. And it only weighs about 14 lbs.

Oh well, enough reminiscing. I am sure we can all think of ways in which our lives are better – and I think that sometimes it's good to spend a few minutes doing so.

Anyway, see you at Monti's on Thursday!

Clark

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

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. Please note that the newsletter is distributed via e-mail.

I hereby apply for (full ___ associate ___) membership in the IEEE Phoenix area Consultants Network.

NAME: _____
(Last) (First and initials)

IEEE member? Yes ___ (Membership number _____) No ___

P.E.? Yes ___ (States: _____) No ___

Area(s) of expertise: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Company address: _____

Telephone: _____ FAX: _____

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Preferred mail address: Work ___ Home ___ Signature: _____

Mail completed form with membership fee payable to "IEEE-PACN" to:

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Fees: Full member, IEEE Member: \$25
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