

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Paul Everett

Our meeting this month will be held on Thursday, October 9 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. Chuck Ptasek will talk about "Business Intelligence". Chuck is president of Charles, Charles and Associates and business intelligence is his area of expertise. This is an area in that is of significant interest (or it should be) to all of us. We have been eagerly looking forward to Chuck's talk for the better part of six months now so don't miss it. The program will start a bit after 8 so come then if you want to skip dinner. Of course, there is free admission for the program. I think we have settled into the Hacienda Room at the back of the building, but you might want to check when you come in to be sure.

Last month I sort of reviewed the history of our organization so that everyone could understand where we are and how we got here. My great omission was the three Consultants Workshops we have put on, the last one occurring not quite a year ago. Fortunately, our editor, Clark Jones, corrected that omission in his comments in last month's Advisor. All three workshops were quite successful, and substantial benefit was reaped by all who attended. The success of each of the Workshops was ensured by a fairly substantial group of people who worked hard to pull it all off. Bruce Johnson was the chairman of the organizing committee for last year's Workshop and did the lion's share of the work. Our hats are off to Bruce for his tireless efforts on our behalf. My hat is also raised to Clark for catching my omission.

As most everyone is aware, PACN is run by the Executive Board, as it is named in the bylaws. The Board meets at 5 PM prior to each monthly dinner meeting. The Board meetings are held at ETA Engineering not far from University and the Price Freeway. All PACN members are welcome, even encouraged, to attend. The Board currently has seven members, each elected to a three year term. Two or three members (depending on the year) are elected at the December business meeting. The Board is considering a proposal to expand the Board to nine members but has not yet come to a consensus on the issue. Of course, any change would have to be ratified by the membership at the December meeting. By the way, everything the Board does is by consensus, at least for as long as I have been around.

If you have any interest in taking a more active roll in our organization, please come to the Board meetings. The more participation we get the better off we all are, and there are always things that need to be done. One of the responsibilities the Board is charged with is the nomination of candidates to fill vacancies that come up on the Board. The nominees, of course, must be approved at the December meeting. Naturally, the Board is going to nominate folks who have shown an interest in contributing to the organization. So anyone who is interested in serving on the Board definitely should attend the Board Meetings. But if you are interested in taking a more active roll but do not want to be an actual Board member, come anyway. We promise we won't draft you without your consent. By the way, we have a couple of PACN members who regularly attend Board meetings, make major contributions to the organization and are not regular Board members, at least not yet.

Last month, David Douthit talked about "COTS, Contamination, and Contracts; a Critical Combination". The issue was the use of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) components in military and other high reliability hardware. The problem is that commercial components are not designed to have a long mean-time-between-failure (MTBF) since with the rush of technology commercial products become obsolete fairly quickly. The same is not true of military hardware, and the use of COTS components puts these systems at risk of failure at critical times. Dave's talk was very interesting and informative.

Frank Garza is going to talk about quality as in ISO 9001-2000 and the SAE Aerospace Standard 9100A in the spring. We haven't scheduled next year's talks yet, but Frank's should be fairly early in the year. It should dovetail right in with Dave's talk on COTS. We are also setting up a talk by a representative of the State of Arizona Board of Technical Registration. This will be a "can't miss" opportunity for anyone interested in putting PE after his name. This talk, by the way, is being set up by one of the non-board members. Don't forget that we are also trying to confirm a talk by the Chief Information Officer at General Dynamics on "Information Security" for January.

After this month we only have two meetings left for this year. The programs for the rest of the year are:

- 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 – Member Praba Kumarakulasingam is going to computer operating systems. Praba is

a software engineer who started his own consulting business a year or two ago and is serving clients around the country.

- 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.

We have started putting together the programs for next year, but there are still plenty of open dates. If you have an interest in presenting one of the programs or would like to suggest someone else, please send me an email at [peverett@everettinfrared.com](mailto:peverett@everettinfrared.com). Also, let us know if you don't have a particular speaker in mind but have a subject area you would like to hear about.

Jim Soudriette passed on a link to an interesting article on the national electrical grid. The link is <http://www.tipmagazine.com/tip/INPHFA/vol-9/iss-5/p8.html>. The title of the article is *What's wrong with the electric grid?*, and it looks quite interesting.

We would like to get a "Letters to the Editor" section going in the *Advisor*. If you would like to say something, please send it to our editor, Clark Jones, at [jones8@mindspring.com](mailto:jones8@mindspring.com). Clark tells me he prefers rtf format [editor's note: the preferred format is actually plain text, ".txt" files], but I know he also accepts Word 6. However, Word XP is no good.

The 2004 dues are due January 1, but Bill will be more than happy to collect them early. If

you haven't paid your 2003 dues yet, let's get going - time is running out. You can send a check for either or both years 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 or 2004 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

You might notice a slightly different look to this month's edition of *The Advisor*. I've gone to a different word processing program, as I recently upgraded the computer that I'm using to put together *The Advisor* to Mandrake Linux 9.1, and it included OpenOffice 1.0. (Besides, I couldn't get the version of WINE that WodPerfect requires to run.)

I'm sure that many of you have heard my prediction that we'll see cars that can drive themselves sometime between 2010 and 2020. Most folks just roll their eyes when they hear this prediction, but within recent weeks I've had a small bit of vindication on this: Toyota has recently started selling a car that can parallel park itself. Right now it's only available in Japan, and is not an inexpensive option, at about \$3000, for such limited functionality. But it is a start, and since it's based mostly on computer technology we should expect to see the functionality increase and the price drop.

Off on another tangent, I may need to have someone fill in for me on getting *The Advisor* out for December. If the trip actually happens I'll have to miss the November meeting (reminder: our "homework assignments" for Jim Soudriette are due then!) but will be back in time for the December meeting (so, Paul won't be able to railroad me into an office I don't want just because I'm not present). Oh, I'll have to insist that any submissions for November's issue of *The Advisor* get to me by November 1.

Paul mentioned that we'd like to have a "letters to the editor" column. It would help to actually *have* some letters to the editor to publish!

See you at Monti's on October 9<sup>th</sup>!

Clark

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Executive Board

|                                |                  |               |                           |
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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: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

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Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred mail address: Work\_\_\_\_ Home\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

William D. Morgan  
Treasurer, IEEE PACN  
23 E. Fairmount Drive  
Tempe AZ 85282

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Full member, non-IEEE Member \$30  
Associate member: \$20