



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Paul Everett

Our meeting this month will be held on Thursday, September 9th. We will again be at the Arthur and Louise Price Community Room at the Chandler Fashion Center where we have been holding our meetings since June. The Board decided to stay there through the end of the year to give the place a fair test. We could stay there indefinitely, go back to Monti's or meet at another location if a restaurant with an appropriate private room can be located. The attributes we are looking for are:

1. above all, a place with a private room where we will not disturb and be disturbed by other guests
2. a capacity of up to 50 people – Even though we usually have half that number or less, we could have a bunch of folks show up if we have a particularly interesting program.
3. a more central location
4. a place where people can order off the menu so that they can eat a lot or not very much, high carb or low carb or whatever

The biggest problem with Monti's seems to be the restricted menu. If you didn't want a full scale dinner, you were sort of out of luck. Monti's also tended to be a bit noisy at times, but I think we were able to deal with that. The Price Room is certainly large enough and quiet. You can get whatever food you want from the food court or carryout from one of the restaurants. On the down side, it is a meeting room and doesn't have white table cloths and the ambiance of a

more formal sit-down restaurant. It has tables and chairs, and we can sit around and talk to one another just like we did at Monti's. It's just that we don't have the table cloths and the waiter. Another problem with Price is its southern location. It is a long trip for the folks from the north and west part of the Valley. Where we hold our meetings is key to the health and welfare of the Network. We really need everyone's ideas and opinions. Please send me an email at peverett@everettinfrared.com with anything you have to say on the subject. If you want to go back to Monti's, let us know. If you know of a more appropriate location, tell us that. If you think Price is the right place, tell us that too.

We had a very good meeting last month with two presentations. Chris Schene from Anadigm was our regular speaker and described the AnadigmVortex analog gate arrays that as best I can figure out are a clever application of switched capacitor filters. He also demonstrated their programming and operation. Eli Kawam put up a poster presentation on the SBIR proposal he submitted last month. During the time between when we had dinner and Chris talked, Eli took us through all the steps in identifying the requirement, finding and talking to the sponsors and decision makers and finding the consultant with the right contacts to support his proposal. Our speaker at this month's meeting provided invaluable support and guidance to Eli. Eli has promised to put his posters up again this month, and that will provide an excellent tie-in to this month's program.

Our speaker will be John Snodgrass who is the Technology Program Coordinator at the Small Business Development Center at Maricopa Community Colleges. He will speak on ***SBIR Basics***:

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program is a highly competitive one that encourages a small business to explore its technological potential and provides an incentive to profit from commercializing its ideas. The inclusion of qualified small businesses in the nation's research and development (R&D) arena stimulates high-tech innovation. Also, the United States gains entrepreneurial spirit as it meets its specific R&D needs.

John will encourage and allow plenty of time for questions. His job is to help small, technology oriented businesses not only survive but prosper. He provided a whole bunch of help to Eli in the preparation of Eli's SBIR proposal. Eli's poster presentation on his SBIR proposal, of course, is a perfect fit with John's program. Anyone who is thinking about the SBIR program or may think about submitting a proposal at some time in the future should not miss this meeting. As Eli puts it, "this guy is really good".

Ed Koch is one of our long time members, and next month he is going to talk about his log splitter. Ed designed a log splitter that he is having manufactured and China and is marketing to major retailers such as Home Depot and the like. He is going to tell us about all of the hurdles he had to get over to make it all happen at next month's meeting. Consultants are essentially by definition small businessmen (or women). Usually, we don't get too involved in the manufacturing and marketing of manufactured products, but sometimes we do – think of Lane Garrett and his solar panel business at ETA. I don't know if Lane has considered manufacturing in

China to lower costs, but several of my customers are doing just that. China is fast becoming the world's low cost manufacturing powerhouse. It will be interesting to find out from Ed just how it is done. Apparently, it is a straightforward process and not all that difficult.

In any case, we should have very good meetings both this month and next. The meetings always start at 6:30 with networking and general socializing followed by dinner with the program starting a bit after 8. If you haven't been to the new venue yet, Chandler Fashion Center is located in the block with Loop 101 on the east, Loop 202 on the south and Chandler Blvd. on the north. Chandler Village Drive is on the west, but nobody knows what that is. The Price Community Room is on the south side of the mall just east of the food court. There are signs on the walls to tell you where to go if you look for them. See you on both second Thursdays.

Also, the Executive Board meetings precede the regular meeting and start at 5, again in the Price room. PACN members are always welcome, but keep the conversation turned off so we can conduct the meeting.

Paul

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By Vaughn Treude (guest editor)

Clark Jones is on vacation this month so I'm filling in for him. He's been living the nomad's life as of late (lucky guy) so I'll be doing this again before the year ends.

Things are finally picking up in software-land. Business has been slow for me for the past two years. I get the impression that many engineers and technical people have been similarly affected. I've even interviewed for a number of permanent positions, but with no

success. I get email propositions for contract work, but they are mostly on the east coast. This would be too far away from my family, though I've considered taking short-term work on California. Luckily, a long-time associate came through with an embedded project that should keep me busy (and paid) through the end of the year.

This brings me to the topic of marketing. This has been a shortcoming of mine (as I believe it is for many technical people.) For the first eight years of my consulting practice, business was good enough that I didn't need to make much effort. All I did was network regularly, and keep in touch with colleagues. Somebody always had a software project that needed doing, and I often had to turn work down.

The recession changed that. I have had several projects in the last two years, but none of the nice hourly contract work that I'd had before. You'd think I'd have woken up and smelled the coffee at that point. Instead I became involved in a long-term Linux project on a low-pay-with-equity arrangement. We finished that project this May and I have yet to see any additional proceeds. During that time, I neglected to improve my marketing, still just networking. I fell into the trap of excessive optimism, because there were still people coming to me with projects. But these projects didn't always happen, and were often postponed indefinitely. When the economy was good, this rarely happened! Please

understand, I'm not blaming anyone. I believe the proposals were made in good faith. It's just that in hard times, companies' income falls, and funding is hard to find, and there just isn't the discretionary money for development projects.

So I need to market more seriously, starting now. I recently attended a seminar given by TIE (The Indus Entrepreneurs – I've been a member for 2 years.) The topic was “Designing an Elevator Pitch.” This interested me, because when Henry Berger was head of this group, he promoted that. We all had a 15-second summary of our business and/or expertise, and practiced it each meeting. TIE's focus was a bit different. The pitch was designed to be about a minute long, with the goal of winning over possible investors. Though I'm not seeking venture capital, I realized my pitch was deficient. All it did was describe what I do. Mine didn't have a good tag line, address the potential customer's problem, or differentiate me from my competitors. Nor did I project the proper sense enthusiasm! This is an issue I'm now working on.

So in conclusion – don't neglect marketing, and don't fall into the optimism trap. The elevator pitch is an important marketing technique, and I'm working on others. I'll save the rest for future issues, since I expect to be filling in for Clark again in upcoming months.

Vaughn

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