



A FEW WORDS FROM THE PAST PRESIDENT...

by Paul Everett

I have had the honor and privilege of serving as your president for the past three years. I firmly believe that an organization is only as strong as its membership and the active roles that the members take in the organization. That is the primary reason why I pushed to expand the Executive Board to nine members – to get more people directly involved in running the organization. Now I think it is time to pass the torch to someone else. We need to keep things moving, look at new ideas and tap into the enthusiasm that is out there ready and waiting. Vaughn Treude has agreed to serve as our new President. Vaughn was already an active member of the Network when I joined in 1996. I think he has always been a member of the Board, at least as long as I have been around, and he was the long time editor of our newsletter, *The Advisor*. When he gave up being the newsletter editor, he agreed to take over our web site as webmaster. I agreed to go back to that job if Vaughn would agree to step up to the bar, so to speak. So I guess we are trading jobs. Vaughn has always been very active in the Network. He seldom misses a meeting, either a regular meeting or a Board meeting, and that is saying something since he lives in Glendale. He is also the guy who has been going to Costco to get the food and drinks for our May picnic. I hope everyone will enthusiastically support Vaughn as he leads this organization into the future.

We are at least trying out a new meeting venue. In the early days the meetings were held at a number of different restaurants, and then we more or less

settled in at Monti's. When I joined the Network the cost was \$10, and the Network made a bit of a profit. Monti's actually charged something closer to \$9. Then the prices kept going up to the point where a year ago Monti's was charging \$21-22 a head. At one point we had gone off to a restaurant in Mesa. After that we met at the Blackeyed Pea at the Scottsdale Pavilions until it went out of business. Then for lack of any other ideas we went back to Monti's. The treasury was subsidizing the meals at Monti's for the last couple of years we were there to keep the cost to the members down, but we had reached the point where we couldn't do it anymore. A number of people had said that they couldn't come any longer – the cost was just too much. Others were concerned about the limited menu choices. For the past six months we have been meeting at the Price Community Room at the Chandler Fashion Center. The normal cost to hold a meeting there is \$200, but we got it for free since we are non-profit. The bottom line is that it didn't work out too well. The room was quite nice, and we all tended to get our food from the food court for \$5-10. But it just didn't have the atmosphere of a sit down restaurant, and getting to the southeast location in rush hour was a problem for a lot of people.

At our round table discussion last month Jim Soudriette suggested that we look at the Denny's at Scottsdale and Osborn Roads. It has a private room that will hold up to fifty people quite nicely. Each person can order whatever he or she wants from the regular menu, and we get separate checks. Our treasurer really appreciates that since trying to sort things out when everyone orders something different would be a mess. Bruce Johnson, I and a third person held a business lunch there just to try it out. We all thought the food was quite good and quite a bit

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cheaper than Monti's. The most expensive thing I saw on the menu was the T-bone steak dinner for about \$13. We are going to try Denny's out and see how things go. The location, just south of downtown Scottsdale is still a bit east of center but much more centrally located than either Monti's or the Fashion Center. By the way, I recommend the big chef's salad for about \$7.

I think we all agree that the programs at our meetings need to be upgraded and we need to bring in more outside speakers. In keeping with the idea of getting as many people involved as possible, we set up the Program Committee with Mike Jordan as chairman and Eli Kawam and Ed Mischen as members. All three are Board members, but the committees are not limited to Board members. Vaughn may appoint new members to the Program Committee or the other committees, currently Membership and Marketing, in the future. If you have any ideas and would like to serve on one of the committees, let him know of your interest.

Thank you for letting me serve, and I hope you will give your full support to Vaughn as he moves the organization forward.

Paul

NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Vaughn Treude

Happy New Year, everyone! I appreciate Paul's vote of confidence and the chance to try a new role in the organization.

I'm glad that we're trying a new meeting location, and I hope it will allow more people to attend. I know that it will be a lot shorter drive for those of us on the west side. I did like Monti's, the main drawback being the constantly rising

meal price. Hopefully the new place will work out better.

I have a few modest goals for our organization. First of all, I agree with Paul in that we need to have more outside speakers on a broader range of topics. I'm not criticizing the presentations our members have given. But I believe we'll learn more by bringing in presenters from the outside. Past experience has shown that certain topics and speakers will bring in more people to the meeting, and this is something I'd like to work on.

Secondly, I think we should try to return to more of a business focus, especially in the area of marketing. I have a selfish interest in this, since this previous year was a real struggle for my own business. But I think that most of us could benefit from better sales and marketing practices.

I also think we should try to attract new members. This is something we've talked about for a long time, but we've made the effort only sporadically. A better variety of meeting presentations may help, but we also need to look for new ways of promoting the network.

While I'm on the topic of goals, we need to decide (and soon) whether or not we want to do another Consultant's Workshop this year (or perhaps early next year.) In the past we've scheduled this to coincide with national AICN meetings that happened to occur in the Phoenix area. This allowed us to have some of the national IEEE members to speak at our event while they were already here. I'm not sure when the next AICN meeting will be here, but I'm equally unsure whether the tie-in was beneficial. It's true that the national organization made up the money we lost on the workshop. But we didn't have much in the way of new and interesting presentations, which is one reason our attendance was so poor. I submit that we shouldn't even consider holding another workshop unless we have some fresh approach, both for the content of the workshop and the promotion of the event.

As for the coming meeting, Mike Jordan of Jordan Electro-Optical (not the basketball player) will be giving a talk on Voice over Internet

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Protocol, or VOIP. As always our monthly meeting is at 6:30 on the second Thursday of the month (January 13th.) Please send me email at vaughn@nakota-software.com if you have any questions or concerns. We'd also like to get a rough idea of how many will be attending, so we'd appreciate an email from those who are planning to come. (But don't let this top you from attending if you forget to inform us in advance! We're not that formal of a group! :-)) Another event that I'd like to promote is the IEEE Computer Society meeting which happens at 6 PM on the second Wednesday of the month (1/12/05) at DeVry University at 2149 West Dunlap in Phoenix. This month the presenter will be *Advisor* editor Clark Jones who will speak about his years of experience in the field of IC testing. You can contact Bob Bianca (Bob.Bianca@Computer.Org) to get more information on that event.

Hope to see you on the 13th!

Vaughn

EDITOR 'S MESSAGE

by Clark Jones

First of all, I'd like to thank Vaughn for filling in for me as editor while I was off wandering around the globe. (For what it's worth, I happened to realize that I've spent the past four Thanksgivings in four countries on three continents – 2001 I was here in Phoenix, 2002 I was in Australia, 2003 I was in London, and 2004 I was in Germany.)

A quick overview of my travels of 2004 is that I spent about 4 weeks in Australia in the August-September time frame, and then 8 weeks in Europe in the October-December time frame. The Europe trip included 2 weeks in Northern Ireland, and 6 weeks in Italy, with a side trip to Germany for Thanksgiving. One highlight of the trip was a visit to Paestum (about 60 miles south
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of Naples) which is the site of ancient Greek ruins, dating to about the 5th century BCE. In the museum there I happened to spot an example of some objects that, had they been known in the late 19th century, could have been presented as “prior art” (coming from graves dating to about 250 BCE) to counter a rather well-known patent, to wit, the safety pin! (Since that patent has long since expired, there's not much point in trying to get it struck down.)

I would like to make a comment on Vaughn's column from last month: at the beginning of the 20th century, medical doctors were not licensed. I've heard that there were studies at the time revealing that only a small percentage of them had college degrees, a surprising number had never finished high school, and that roughly half of the so-called “medical schools” were incompetent. (I heard this on the radio some weeks ago, so am reproducing it by memory.) My feelings about the “licensing issue”, at least for doctors, is that there is both a need for state-sponsored documentation of competence (pronounce that “licensing”), but also a way for the “non-licensed” to practice provided they clearly inform their clientel that they are not licensed.

Unfortunately, in our present environment, in my not-so-humble opinion the major “documentation of competence” for software engineers (namely, Microsoft certification) is actually a “documentation of incompetence” as it is entirely Microsoft-centric.

Off on a different tangent, your “humble editor” will be the presenter at this month's IEEE-Computer Society meeting, at 6:00 PM on January 12 at DeVry University, 2149 W. Dunlap. My presentation is entitled “Testing Computer Chips: How Digital ICs are Tested”. They even provide a supper consisting of sub sandwiches, making the price really right: FREE!

Clark

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