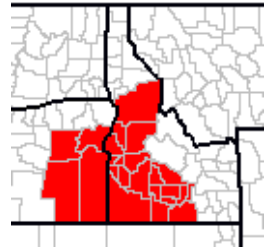




IEEE Boise Section Newsletter September 2012



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Upcoming Events

October 26-28th – Idaho Startup Weekend: Your membership dollars at work supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in the Treasure Valley!

IEEE Boise Section is pleased to be a Platinum Sponsor of the fifth installment of Idaho Startup Weekend taking place 26-28 October at Hotel 43 in downtown Boise. First created in 2007, Startup Weekend is an international event that provides entrepreneurs an opportunity to test their startup business ideas. With the tagline, “No Talk, All Action,” Idaho Startup Weekend will give aspiring innovators an opportunity to commercialize their ideas in just one fast-paced and exhilarating weekend.

In the short 54-hour timeframe, participants pitch their ideas, form teams, and build a viable product. Startup Weekend likens the event to “an MBA in a weekend” because it helps professionals learn through the act of creating. Idaho Startup Weekends attract the best and brightest in the Boise community; therefore, the event helps participants build long-lasting relationships with influential people. According to internal statistics from the organization, Startup Weekend held 260 events in 67 countries and startups incubated at its events received at least \$30 million in outside funding last year alone.

Registration costs are tiered based upon the number of participants. Registration for the first 20 participants is \$20, participants 21-30 pay \$30 and for participants 31 and beyond the cost is \$40. Participants receive a prize pack for attending and winning teams receive prizes. Additionally, lunch and dinner are included at no extra charge to all registered participants. To register, visit <http://idaho.startupweekend.org>. IEEE members can register using the promo code "IEEESW12" to receive 10% off their ticket cost.

Thursday, November 8th – Boise Computer Society Banquet

Time: Doors open at 6:00pm, Dinner served at 6:30pm
Location: BSU Student Union, Boise, Idaho
Register: <http://tinyurl.com/ieebcs12>. **Registration deadline is Oct 31st.**

Guest Speaker: Dan Isla, NASA Jet Propulsion Lab

Topic: "From BSU to Mars: An alumni's experience working on NASA's most complex spacecraft ever sent to the Red Planet. "

The design, assembly, launch, and landing of the Mars Curiosity Rover has taken years of engineering and scientific dedication. Curiosity is NASA's most capable rover to date and successfully landed at Gale Crater on August 5th 2012 to determine if Mars was ever, or could be a habitable environment for life as we know it. While it may seem like science fiction, rocket science may be more down to Earth than you think.



Dan Isla is an Electrical Systems Engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory working on the Mars Science Laboratory, Curiosity mission. Since graduating from BSU in 2009 he has worked on various aspects of the project including Assembly Test and Launch Operations (ATLO), Entry Descent and Landing, and Surface Operations.

Dan is a Boise State University Alumni and graduated in 2009 with a BSEE. He has been at JPL for the past 3 years full time and was a summer student at JPL before that. Dan grew up in Boise Idaho, enjoys the outdoors, snowboarding and writing software.

Cost: Early registration (by Oct. 24) / Regular (by Oct. 31)
IEEE Members and guest: \$15 / \$20
IEEE Student branch members: \$5 / \$10
Other BSU students: \$15 / \$20
General Public: \$25 / \$30



Please contact Joe Rekiere (jrekiere@ieee.org) for additional information.
IEEE Boise Computer Society: <http://www.ewh.ieee.org/r6/boise/computer/>

Tuesday, November 13th – Boise Section 50th Anniversary Celebration

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Location: Berryhill & Co., 121 N. 9th St., Boise
RSVP: https://meetings.vtools.ieee.org/meeting_view/list_meeting/14363

Did you know that the Boise Section was officially formed in 1962? This makes 2012 our 50th Anniversary. January 1, 2013 also marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of IEEE through the merger of the AIEE and IRE. We plan to celebrate with a social

event hosted at Berryhill & Co. The Boise Section will sponsor appetizers and a cake, and a no-host bar will be available. All Section members are invited to attend, and we extend a special invitation to our Life Members who have helped keep our Section going for so many years. There will be an open microphone, and we encourage members to share 30-second long stories about their careers, the IEEE and how they've seen technology evolve over the last 50 years. We plan to capture the stories to preserve the history of the IEEE Boise Section.

Please RSVP at the link above to help us in planning the food. We hope to see you there. Email Randy Wolff, rwolff@micron.com with any questions.

Announcements

Boise Mini Maker Faire Update

By Chris Gunning

The Boise Mini Maker Faire producers are busily planning this first annual do-it-yourself festival the weekend of May 24th, 2013. Maker Faire is the World's Largest Show and Tell festival – a family-friendly showcase of invention, creative, and resourcefulness. It's a place where creative people of all ages and backgrounds show what they are making and share what they are learning. There are over 18 categories of making that range from Food & Farming, Human Performances, Fabrication and Industrial Arts, to Robots and Music.

Community driven, independently Mini Maker Faire events like this one are being produced around the United States and the World.

The Boise Mini Maker Faire is being sponsored by the IEEE Boise Section. We highly encourage local IEEE members to plan to participate in this exciting event.

One way to get involved now is by attending Maker Meetups. Maker Meetups are events leading up to the festival that feature demos, presentations, and place for other Makers to mingle and collaborate.

The Boise Maker Meetup in July included exhibits from members of [Open Lab Idaho](#) (and their machines that make things), live silk screening demos and activities by [InkPony](#) and the [Design Bandits](#), and the FIRST Robotics robot presented by the [Bots of Prey](#) team.

The September 8th Meetup focused on intellectual property for Makers. IP lawyer Brad Frazer gave an excellent talk about the fundamentals of patents, copyrights, licensing, and trademarks, when you need them, when you don't, and how to share your work without regrets. Parts of his talk are posted on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/BoiseMiniMakerFaire?feature=CAQQwRs%3D>.

You can find out more about the Boise Mini Maker Faire at <http://boisemakerfaire.com/>. To find out about future Meetups and other upcoming activities, 'like' Boise Maker Faire on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/BoiseMakerFaire>.

IEEE Elections

By Elisa Barney Smith

All IEEE members of graduate student grade or above should have received a ballot from IEEE asking you to vote. You probably also got an email along this line, if not 2 or 3. At the Region meeting and the Area meeting I have had a chance to meet both candidates for Region 6 Director Elect. I can say both are great and either would do a great job. Both have been very involved in IEEE and intend to stay involved. In their involvement both have contributed some "words of wisdom" which I have received permission to publish below. Since most of you haven't had a chance to actually talk to these two candidates, I hope that through these articles you get more than a list of where they got degrees, what IEEE positions they have held and their official "party

platforms" that are available in the biographies on the ballot. Please vote for Region Director elect and for the other positions. The balloting period ends **1 October at 12:00 noon Central Time USA (17:00 UTC)**.

Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast

By Tom Coughlin
(Region 6 Director Elect Candidate)
Santa Clara Valley Section

This is a piece about employment; work, earning an income, bringing home the bacon (of course it is your choice on whether you will eat that bacon). Engineers and other technical professionals face a world very different from that of their parents and grandparents. 30 years ago or more it was not uncommon for someone to work for one company for an entire career, now that is a very rare thing. We live in a very different world where companies rise and fall, lay off workers, move facilities and functions and move them back again. We also live in a world where change is constant and far-reaching and driven by the development of new technologies and new ways to use those technologies.

Work (unless volunteer work) is normally a basic economic exchange. Someone has something or can do something that another person wants done, and so something of value is exchanged to get that thing or have that objective accomplished. Exchanges like this help us avoid fighting each other to get what we need or want. An important element of the type of work that most engineers, software writers, and other creative people do is that they make things that never existed before, do things that were never possible before and can satisfy desires that people never knew they had. In a very real sense these people create new wealth. This is in fact the reason why many engineers do the sort of thing they do—we can create the tools that literally change the world, and we enjoy doing it.

So if we can do things that are so valuable, why do many of us feel like we are struggling for our very existence? I think there are several reasons for this. We live in a culture that seems to promote debt. Having regular payments to retire this debt in a world where we may not know whether our income will be steady and sufficient to support it can lead to unease and worry. Also, the pace of technological change, which we helped create, leads to the early obsolescence of the knowledge that helped us create these changes. Thus we may find ourselves less able to create technologies than younger people who may be more familiar with how they work and how to use them.

Many of us deal with our employment concerns in relative isolation, perhaps only sharing our concerns with family or a few friends. If we are lucky these family or friends may have some understanding of the sort of work that we do and the motivations that drive us to do what we do. But most of us are not so lucky. Many engineers are somewhat withdrawn by nature, which is why they become involved in a world dominated by things and systems rather than people. We need some way to reach across the lonely voids between us and find comradeship and support to help each other continue to be relevant and provide value in a changing world.

This is where an organization of people with some common interests and experience, such as the IEEE, can be of great value to the community of engineers and technical professionals. In region 6 as a whole electrical engineering, software and many of the other skills within the scope of the IEEE have led to companies and institutions that have created great wealth and have changed the world. We have in our numbers, great men and women who are an example of how to provide value through a long career that may include many changes in activities along the way. IEEE Region 6 can do several things to help its members in their quest to continue to work and provide value.

Here are some concrete things that Region 6 can do to help its members to prepare for a lifetime of productive activity (and these are things that I would like to pursue if elected as Director--Elect of Region 6):

- Between our many sections and society chapters we have a great variety of meetings, symposia, one-day classes that people outside those sections can benefit from—we need to find a low-cost, easy to use way to make as many of these activities as possible available on-line to IEEE members everywhere in Region 6.
- Lifetime employment is rare but many people have taken their fate into their own hands by becoming contractors or consultants. We need to expand the IEEE consultants network to sections where it isn't available yet and help to promote skills and knowledge on how to run a consultant business and how to create a network to find new work.
- In our larger IEEE sections there are often trade shows, IEEE meetings put on by IEEE societies and other places where we should be seeking to have an IEEE table or other presence. We should take advantage of more of these opportunities and get our

volunteers to help man these tables. In this way these volunteers can meet new people, expand their networks and find out about new opportunities. Perhaps there are ways to help pull in folks from smaller sections to join in this fun.

- We need to develop new tools and methods to help us train experienced technical IEEE members the new skills and knowledge they need to work in emerging fields and businesses. I think we can work with educational institutions as well as the larger IEEE to bring such opportunities to every IEEE member in Region 6.

- Volunteers are the very basis of the value of the IEEE and being an IEEE volunteer can benefit the volunteering member. For instance these experiences can build leadership skills and they help the volunteer connect with other volunteers, learn about new technical fields and interesting opportunities. We need to encourage our fellow IEEE members to become volunteers—and thus also spread the work around so a handful of folks aren't doing all the work and burning out. Volunteering to help with the IEEE should be one of the first things, rather than the last thing you do, when you are looking for work or a change in what you do.

We can help each other to remain relevant and able to contribute to a new technical world that is constantly developing around us. That should be one of the major roles of an organization like the IEEE. However we also need to encourage each other to have attitudes and an outlook on life that enables us to change as the world around us changes. That is what friends and trusted colleagues need to do for each other. We need to encourage each other to seek to do, like Alice in Wonderland, six impossible things before breakfast.

Personal Positioning for Engineers: The Choices Are Yours

By Paul Kostek

After a period of extraordinary growth, the engineering profession has hit some turbulence, with demand for engineers slowing. Opportunities still exist; they just may not be exact matches to what we seek. As engineers in today's marketplace, we need to take responsibility for our careers and adjust to changes in the employment environment. We need to practice "personal positioning" — exploring the options available and then determining which best suit our individual needs.

We all pursue different goals in our careers and define success in different ways. Traditionally, most engineers have opted for direct employment with a company, government agency or academic institution. But today, employment options have expanded; opportunities exist in:

- Direct Employment
- Contract Employment
- Consulting
- Self-Employment

Within these broad areas, engineers can consider management or technical paths in large, medium-sized or small companies, and they can even choose between start-ups and established organizations.

Employment Options: Which is Right for You?

Most **direct employees** — those working for a company, agency or organization — can expect to receive regular paychecks; some career guidance; medical, vacation and retirement benefits; and training support. While all of these perks are nice — even necessary — training support is a benefit every direct employee should take advantage of. If you are a direct employee, pursue an advanced degree or complete a certificate program; attend seminars and conferences; or simply take courses that will help you build your skills set. Your employer will reap the benefits of employees who gain and use new knowledge. What's more, increasing your personal intellectual property will be one of the most important things you'll do for yourself; your knowledge, after all, is the one thing you'll take with you when you leave an employer.

Some engineers choose to work as **contract employees** (or temps). These professionals often receive assignments through a contract firm, which pays them an hourly rate, keeping a percentage of the total fee charged to the company for their overhead. Some contract firms provide 401(k) plans, paid vacation and access to medical plans. In most cases, however, if you are a contract employee you are responsible for providing your own benefits, and you must seek and participate in training and continuing education activities on your own.

The fundamental difference between **consultants** and **contractors** is that consultants are responsible for finding their own assignments and covering such expenses as taxes. Consultants can be members of a large or small firm, or can be independent practitioners. Either way, they must often pursue licensing and registration. Registration is legally required for all consultants who call themselves engineers and sell their services to the public or to companies. Corporations are covered by an industrial exemption; as long as at least one employee has a PE license, the other engineers on staff are exempt from licensing. Both consultants and contractors are responsible for their own benefits and training.

Self-employment is generally defined as owning one's own business and providing either a product or service. During the [dot.com](#) revolution of the 1990s, funding for new businesses — or, more likely ideas — was easy to obtain. Venture capitalists were more than willing to fund interesting ideas that might or might not pan out. In today's market, venture capitalists are looking much more closely at ideas, and then are going beyond the ideas themselves. They want to know how large the market is how much company founders have invested. If you're interested in pursuing self-employment, and will need to develop relationships with venture capitalists to do so, consider whether you have the financial resources to support yourself as well as provide benefits for yourself and your family.

Career Options for Direct Employees

If, after considering your options, you think direct employment is right for you, you will have several additional options to consider. Do you follow a technical or a management path? Do you seek out a large, mid-sized or small company? Is an established organization preferable to a start-up?

Management versus Technical Tracks

One positive change in today's marketplace is that it has become far more flexible; it is now much easier to move back and forth between management and technical roles. Because the marketplace has become so competitive, companies cannot afford to have people in the wrong positions. And even with restructuring and the penchant for outsourcing seen in companies today, management opportunities do still exist. You just have to be open about your objectives and you have to be willing to make a change — perhaps to a new company — to achieve your management goals.

You will need to make choices on a technical track, too. For example, will you be a generalist or a specialist? This decision will be key to the career and skills development decisions you will make throughout your career. When pursuing the technical route, be sure to monitor industry trends to determine whether change along the way is necessary.

Company Size: Do Numbers Equal Career Strength?

In addition to deciding which path to follow, you must also consider the size of the organization you want to join. Large companies can provide a wealth of options in terms of exposure to technologies, projects and management positions. They tend to be bureaucratic, however, and you may not be exposed to the work of different groups within the organization. In a small company, you may have limited technologies at your disposal and fewer project and management choices, but you will have the opportunity to work with many different groups in a more intimate environment.

Is the Cornerstone Date Important?

Beyond sheer size, company age is also a consideration. Should you join an established organization or a start-up?

The dramatic growth of start-ups in the 1990s and the availability of venture capital provided a window for quick wealth that was not previously available to most technical professionals. Start-ups were a career choice few engineers would have considered previously. The bust of 2000 brought many professionals back to reality, but opportunities do still exist with start-ups. How much risk can you live with? Will you be able to sleep at night not knowing if your company will be in business tomorrow? Can you survive on a reduced salary and do without benefits while you experience the excitement of being able to contribute to a new venture?

Are You Positioned?

The keys to positioning yourself for success are understanding where you are in your career and where you want to go; determining the level of risk you can live with; and accepting the fact that in today's marketplace, change is the only given. From there, the options are yours for the choosing.

Section News

Society Chapter and Affinity Group Formation

By Elisa Barney Smith

We had an article in the last newsletter stating that the section is in the process of forming 2 new society chapters and an affinity chapter. Talking with people I think this newsletter isn't very well read as almost no one recalled the articles. For those of you who are reading this newsletter, I have good news to report.

Petitions to form both the Signal Processing Society Chapter and the Solid State Circuits Society Chapter are coming along nicely, but both need one more signature. This can be done by email. If you are a member of one of these societies, or would be willing to join it soon (do your renewal for next year now and I think membership is effective today) we can really use your help. Last week we had a talk that could have been a joint society meeting between the SPSC and SSCSC on the Signal Processing of Sigma Delta ADCs. If these petitions had been complete the talk would have been announced to the whole Boise membership and you could have attended. Both groups have plans for lots of other interesting talks and activities, and are interested in hearing what other Boise Section members want for those activities. You will get great talks here in Boise and don't need to pay for conference registration or take the time to travel to a conference. Contact Uri Rogers <urirogers@u.boisestate.edu> if you are interested in the Signal Processing Society Chapter and contact Vishal Saxena <vishalsaxena@boisestate.edu> if you are interested in the Solid State Circuits Society Chapter. Both need one more signature, so you can be a vital link in getting these going.

Also the petition to form a Life Members Affinity Group is almost complete. If it gets signed and submitted by the end of the year that group will have \$1000 to spend annually on pretty much anything engineering of interest to the members. So if you are a life member, contact Bob Hay <roberthay@boisestate.edu>. How often does someone offer you \$1000 per year to do things that interest you?

Notes:

2012 Boise Section Fall Picnic

By Randy Wolff

The Boise Section held its annual Fall Picnic on September 9 at Municipal Park. The weather was very nice, and people enjoyed socializing until 8:00 pm. Many thanks to the BSU Student Branch led by Nick Luong for taking care of all the food and drink arrangements. The students had two barbecues going, serving up hamburgers, sausages, veggie burgers and egg rolls. BSU colors adorned the picnic tables – nice touch! Around 100 people attended, and it was great to see many new faces including lots of students and professional members with their families. Thanks to those who attended, and we hope to see you at future IEEE events.

Boise Computer Society Social Night

By Joe Rekiere

This past June the Boise Computer Society held a social event at Westys Garden Lanes in Boise for our members to share some time to together and exercise our bowling skills. It was a fun evening that gave members a chance to network and socialize. The

evening was made better by the guests that came along, college students home for the summer and one high school student. If members have other ideas for social events, contact the Chair of the Computer Society, Joe Rekiere. jrekiere@ieee.org

Tesla Museum Fundraiser

By Bob Pownall

You know that Edison invented the light bulb. But did you know that Nikola Tesla came up with the idea of AC power transmission used in almost every house on the planet? (Edison wanted to use DC power.)

You know that Marconi invented radio. But did you know that Tesla had patents on radio transmitters before Marconi? (Tesla's patents were upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.)

Tesla had many other discoveries and inventions in the field of Electrical Engineering but even inside the profession, very few people have heard of him. Outside - almost nobody.

The Tesla Museum wants to fix this. If you'd like to help build a Tesla museum, the Tesla Science Center at Wardencllyffe (Wardencllyffe, NY is the site of Tesla's lab) is running a fund-raising campaign here:

<http://www.indiegogo.com/teslamuseum?c=home>. The drive ends September 29. They've already reached their goal to buy the land and now they're trying to raise as much money as possible towards refurbishing buildings and building a science and discovery center.

Adult Night at the DCI

By Elisa Barney Smith

49 members and guests attended the Discovery Center of Idaho's "Adult Night" in August in a joint event with the section's GOLD group. The Discovery Center knows that their exhibits are of interest to adults as well as children, so they hold these evening events every 2-3 months to let the "older children" play too without having to share the exhibits with those under 21 years of age. This month the theme was "Do it Yourself" and attendees had the opportunity to make a clay pot on a potters wheel, paint some prebaked clay objects, and blow glass to make a necklace pendant. Food trucks are set up in the back yard, and your admission ticket included a glass of beer, wine or other refreshment. The DCI said this event had the highest attendance they had seen yet. We are still assessing the demographics of the attendees (how many were IEEE members and how many were guests who used the discount code), but based on the turnout we are likely to repeat this. If you were there contact us let us know and if you wish you were there let us know that too.

Proctors Needed for IEEEExtreme Programming Contest

By Elisa Barney Smith

The student branch at Boise State has some members is interested in competing in the IEEEExtreme Programming contest in October and needs proctors to enable them to do this. If you are willing to be a proctor for part of the time, please contact Elisa <EBarneySmith@boisestate.edu>. See <http://www.ieee.org/xtreme> for more details. The contest is October 20th. If you are a student member or graduate student member and you are interested, make sure you tell Ngoc soon and get your team registered. Registration will close on 5 October 2012 at 23:59:59 UTC.

\$25 Discount on 2013 IEEE Membership

By Elisa Barney Smith

A few years ago some students started a tradition in IEEE of "IEEE Day". October 2, 2012 is the third time in history when all engineers worldwide are going to celebrate the IEEE Day, on the anniversary of the first time IEEE members gathered to share

their technical ideas in 1884. Publicity for this event has been weak, but it is growing. This year to help celebrate, IEEE is offering a \$25 discount on membership dues for new members. The promotion is valid only for new, professional members (students and graduate students are not eligible). The discount only applies to first year membership dues. So do you know someone who has been thinking about joining? This would be a great way to welcome them. It can only be used for new members, so you need to pass this news on. They need to use the discount code IEEEEDAY12 when they join. What do you get for spreading the word? IEEE regularly has a "Member gets a member" incentive. For every person you get to join IEEE as a new member (not renewing member), if they list you as a reference by giving your member number, you will get a \$15 credit you can use towards your next dues payment, up to a total of \$90 in credit. So \$25 for your friend or colleague and \$15 for you. Not bad. Try it.

Free eBooks

By Elisa Barney Smith

Did you know that IEEE-USA offers IEEE members one free eBook per month? You should be receiving an email from IEEE monthly and if you didn't delete the email, it contains notification about the book of the month. Most books are on "soft skills". An excerpt from one was included earlier in this newsletter by Region 6 director candidate Paul Kostek. So next time you get that IEEE USA email, look through it before you delete it.

Senior Membership Elevation

By Duane Goodner

Congratulations to Boise Section IEEE members who have recently been elevated to Senior Member grade! Taehoon Kim, Joseph Pawlowski, Michael Abraham, Jeritt Kent and Dana Jacobsen have all been elevated to Senior Member grade in 2012. Individuals who have recently been elevated to Senior Member grade will receive special recognition (which they fully deserve!) at the 2013 Spring Banquet.

Anyone interested in applying for Senior Membership can contact Duane Goodner (duane.m.goodner@gmail.com). Information on the membership elevation process is also available at: http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/grade_elevation.html.

Attention All Micron TLP Members!!

By Kristen Hopper

Reminder to members of Micron's Technical Leadership Program (TLP) at level F1 or higher that the TLP member budget allots \$200 per member per year to put toward items such as professional membership dues. This \$200 covers nearly 100% of the IEEE membership dues, so be sure to renew your membership and encourage your fellow TLP members to join IEEE and take advantage of this TLP member privilege.

Company Liaisons

Do you work at a company that employs engineers within our section? We invite each company to have one 'Company Liaison' to join our section's operational committee. The main responsibility of these people is to provide a point of contact to send information from the section Operations Committee to members working at these companies and to return information as to how the needs of their engineers can be met by the section. Company Liaisons are included in email discussions from the OPCOMM, and are encouraged to help advertise section events to members and non-members at their place of employment beyond the section newsletters. They are invited along with all the section members to attend OPCOMM meetings and give us input. If you are interested in being a company liaison, please contact Randy Wolff (rrwolff@micron.com).

Do We Have Your Correct E-mail?

If you haven't been receiving the newsletter or event notices electronically, check what we have for your email address on your mailing label. Please notify both the IEEE (address-changes@ieee.org or <http://services1.ieee.org/membersvc/coa/intro.htm>) and the Boise Section Chair Randy Wolff (rrwolff@micron.com) so we can add you to our electronic mailing list (we get address corrections only once a month from the IEEE). To assure that you get timely information about IEEE Boise events, please make sure we have your correct email address in our address database.

Your 2012 Officers:

IEEE Boise Section:

Chair: Randy Wolff

rrwolff@micron.com

Vice-Chair: Jaydip Guha

guhajaydip@yahoo.com

Secretary: Kristen Hopper

kmmcnair@ieee.org

Treasurer: Sean Collison

scollison@gmail.com

Membership: Duane Goodner

duane_goodner@gmail.com

GOLD Chair: Katie Dellaquila

katie.dellaquila@hp.com

PACE: Manjunath Bhuyar

manjunath.bhuyar@ieee.org

Web Page: Kevin Turner

kevin@kmtturner.com

Newsletter Editor: Jaydeb Goswami

jgoswami@micron.com

Boise EDS Chapter:

Chair: Jaydip Guha

guhajaydip@yahoo.com

Boise PE&IA Chapter:

Chair: Mark Bussert

mbussert@ieee.org

Boise Computer Society Chapter:

Chair: Joe Rekiere

jrekiere@ieee.org

Student Branch at Boise State University:

Chair - Ngoc Luong

Vice Chair: Kyle Straub

Secretary: Donny Kiehn

Treasurer: Aaron Edwards

ieee.bsu.officers@gmail.com

Region 6 Northeast Area Chair:

Elisa Barney Smith

EBarneySmith@boisestate.edu



You make a difference when you join the IEEE.

<http://ieeoboise.org/>