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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow members,

The membership statistics released for India after the February end consolidation is really discouraging. Our membership strength is coming down and more so among student members. We all need to act to ensure that this trend is arrested at the earliest. Students, from more than 200 student branches, form a good portion of the IEEE India membership and we need to review at all levels what IEEE can offer them as membership benefits as well as make all aware the benefits of IEEE membership. Suggestions are most welcome.

IEEE India Council is now a life member of the ECI (Engineering Council of India) and we can actively participate in the making of the rules and regulations of the ECI to ensure the best interests of the Engineering professionals in India.

TENCON 2003 is around the corner and please watch out for the details and participate in it as much as possible.

In a few days from now the Region 10 committee annual meet is scheduled to deliberate the activities in the Region. We hope to resolve many issues facing us during this meet.

I urge all members to subscribe to the IEEE e-mail alias account and make good use of the services extended by IEEE. One can get latest from IEEE by e-mail. For example the "What's new at .." e-mail deliveries is very useful. Please try it out.

With best regards,

R. MURALIDHARAN

Mumbai
Chairman 1 Apr. '03
IEEE India Council

e-mail: r.muralidharan@ieee.org

'There are no great people in this world, only *great challenges* which *ordinary people* rise to meet'

- **William Frederick Halsy, Jr.**

EDITOR'S DESK

"10-foot attitude –
Wal-Mart's success story"

Wal-Mart, world's largest supermarket chain, occupying No.1 position in Fortune Global 500 list, ceremoniously follows what is called '10-foot attitude'. In any Wal-Mart store, whenever a customer comes within 10 feet of an attendant, the attendant will

look him in the eye and greet him. If millions of people visit these stores for their regular purchases, it is not only because of the best varieties or low prices offered there, but also of the care for the customer. This goes very well with the old Chinese proverb "No one without a smiling face should open a shop"

Armed with all the modern information gathering systems provided by PC, Internet etc, today's customer is a well informed person. Hence more of transparency is advisable among service providers, retailers etc, as any attempts to fool the customer for short-term gains would be easily understood, leading to short life for business enterprises. In this era, when businesses are graduating from *customer care* to *satisfaction* to *delight* to the ultimate '*customer ecstasy*', there is absolutely no room for attempts to take the customer for a ride, unless one wants to shut shop early.

An innovative scheme put into action some years back by an organization in the matter of customer care deserves to be noted. They transferred a portion of their advertising budget to a fund newly created for providing free service to a random set of customers. An engineer would visit the customer, inspect the equipment and do servicing if necessary, including changing of some components free of cost. The goodwill created by such an action is much more than what could be achieved by a flashy advertisement. Word-of-mouth publicity through satisfied customers is the best bet for business growth.

N.T.NAIR

Editor

e-mail: del@vsnl.com



IEEE NEWS & EVENTS

IEEE REGION 10 AWARDS

Mr. Y W Liu, Chairman, IEEE Region 10 Award Committee announced the following:

Bangalore Section is the winner of 2001 Reg.10 Outstanding IEEE Section Award

The 2002 Reg 10 Outstanding Volunteer Award Winners are:

K Rajgopal of Bangalore Section

N T Nair of Kerala Section

S C Bhargava of Hyderabad Section

B Poon of NSW Section.

Prof. K Rajgopal is invited to receive the Outstanding Volunteer Award Certificate in the coming Penang R10 Committee Meeting. For other three winners, the Certificate would be sent to the respective Section Chairman for presentation in local

activities.

Special thanks to members of the Award Committee, Teck Seng Lo, Trevor Bird, Takuo Sugano and Bruce Turner, who had devoted and helped to select the winners.

The selection of 2002 Outstanding Section Award would be started immediately after the coming R10 Committee Meeting. For more details of the R10 Award, please check the R10 Web Award Page.

Congratulations to all the winners!

THE FIFTH IEEE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POWER ELECTRONICS AND DRIVE SYSTEMS (PEDS 2003)

17th - 20th November 2003, Singapore

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Please submit the extended summary by 15 April 2003

The IEEE International Conference on Power Electronics and Drives Systems (PEDS) is a biennial series of regular events with the aim of providing a forum for academic and industrial researchers in the area of power electronics, drives and other multi-disciplinary topics for the exchange of ideas and for professional networking. To submit an extended summary or to find out more about the conference, please visit www.ieeepeds.org

The organising committee would like to reassure all our delegates that Singapore has taken every measure to ensure the safety of all citizens and visitors to Singapore. Should you need any assistance, please contact:

PEDS Conference Secretariat

c/o Integrated Meetings Specialist, 1122A Serangoon Rd, Singapore 328206

Tel: (65) 6295 5790 Fax: (65) 6295 5792 Email: peds@inmeet.com.sg

IEEE BOMBAY SECTION THE LARGEST IN REGION 10

IEEE Bombay Section recently gained the distinction of becoming the largest Section in Region 10. According to the statistics on January 31, 2003, the number of members in Bombay Section stood at 8189, which is more than that in Tokyo Section, the erstwhile largest Section in the Region. Bombay Section membership registered a growth of 77.7 % during the last year.

Reported By: Prof. J. Vasi, IIT, Bombay

Difference between "Focus on problems" and "Focus on solutions"

When NASA began the launch of astronauts into space, they found out that the pens wouldn't work at zero gravity. In order to solve this problem, they hired Andersen Consulting (Accenture today). It took them one decade and 12 million dollars. They developed a pen that worked at zero gravity, upside down, under water, on practically any surface including crystal and in a temperature range from below freezing to over 300 degrees C. *The Russians used a pencil*

'Beards are the fastest growing hairs on the human body. If the average man never trimmed his beard, it would grow to nearly 30 feet long in his lifetime'

LIBRARY SCAN

"Beyond the Podium - Delivering Training and Performance to a Digital World"

Book by: Allison Rossett & Kendra Sheldon

Published by: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, USA

The authors unpack some of the exciting learning technologies, the trends, and the new digital age stuff infiltrating the training profession faster than most of us can stay abreast of it. They examine the role of knowledge management, informal learning, independent learning, globalization, certification, e-learning, networking, career self-reliance, object-oriented design, and more. There is also an attempt to redefine the role of training and trainers.

This book is not only for newcomers of training and development (T&D) field., but also for T&D leaders, designers and developers, learners, techies, and non-techies.

SMS AFFECTS LITERACY !

The habit of sending short messages (SMS) on mobile phones is fast catching up as a common and easy mode of communication. Teenagers are the prolific users of this service, many a time extending it to the limits. Here is the latest story about how a teenager has actually written her entire school essay as if she was sending SMS on her mobile phone.

The 13-year old girl submitted the essay to her teacher in a secondary school in Scotland, using SMS style writing as below:

“My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4,we usd 2go2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3:- kds FTF. ILNY, it’s a gr8 plc”

Translation: “ My summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York t see my brother, his girl friend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it is a great place.”

Obviously, The teacher found it difficult to decipher the whole essay. Now, educational experts are worried that literacy could be damaged by too much SMS. Are we also not falling prey to this new trend in writing?

Technology in brief

The New “Age of Myths.”

The “Age of Myths” is far from past. A new age of myths persists in how we breath life into our PCs, how we get them to do special Herculean (and mundane) tasks. But few electronic-age myths are as entrenched as those associated with using, storing, and recharging the batteries that power our notebooks, cell phones, and other electronic gadgets.

One reason for the proliferation of battery myths is that battery technology keeps changing, and each battery chemistry demands its own version of tender loving care. For example, most of us have experienced the relatively short shelf life of fully-charged Nickel Cadmium (NiCad) batteries, plus their infamous “memory effect” that demands that NiCads be fully discharged, and then fully re-charged, for maximum capacity. If you use just half of the battery charge each day and then put it into its charger, the battery will eventually come to believe that its total capacity is only half of what it actually is! Therefore, we’ve been trained not to “top off” our batteries (even though this is impractical in real-life use).

(More technical information about Nickel Cadmium and Nickel Metal Hydride batteries available at <http://www.mbi.panasonic.co.jp/oembatteries/english/index.html>).

But today, NiCads are long-gone from most high-end electronics, replaced by the better-suited Lithium Ion battery. Lithium Ion batteries have excellent shelf life characteristics. If you store a fully-charged battery at room temperature, it will still retain 88% of its charge after seven months. They typically will endure over 500 charge-discharge cycles before their capacity begins to deteriorate. And they have no “memory effect.” Charge ‘em when you will. Don’t feel guilty!

If you plan to store the batteries, charge them to between 30% and 50% of full charge, and then recharge them once per year, since “over-discharge” is hard on their health. (You can’t over-discharge the battery in normal use because a circuit within the battery shuts things down when it reaches that threshold voltage; if you then recharge the battery, all is well.)

Of course, battery technology is not standing still, even if it sometimes feels that way as we keep paying for a never-ending stream of cylindrical and rectangular packages. Some of the offshoots of NBIC (the convergence of Nanotechnology, Biology and Medicine, Information sciences, and Cognitive sciences), as pointed out in the Feb. 5 UCLA News (<http://newsroom.ucla.edu>), may be batteries composed of millions of ultra-tiny 3D structures. These are designed to improve the performance of the batteries we use for our “macro” devices (such as portable electronics), while in smaller form they may also provide “nano-power” for the growing number of nano-scale “machines” that lie in our NBIC future.

Even so, unless the promise of tiny fuel cells or other portable power technology is met, it is felt that “the future” will continue to include a never-ending stream of batteries passing through our hands, to our devices, then into our trash cans, and finally ending up in our landfills. We still do need a ‘better way...’

But then, that’s what innovation is all about!

‘Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed’

-UNESCO Constitution

‘Men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything but- *live for it*’

-Charles Caleb Colton

‘Peace and friendship with all mankind is our wisest policy, and I wish we may be permitted to pursue it’

-Thomas Jefferson

‘The squeaky wheel may get the most oil, but it’s also the first to be replaced’

-Marilyn Vos Savant

Administrivia:

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Send your comments about this page, to : s.gopakumar@ieee.org
This page, developed and maintained by: S.Gopakumar
