

ELECTRON

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THE IEEE CHARLOTTE SECTION NEWSLETTER

May 1997

COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY MEETING DCS MOBILE PHONE TECHNOLOGY



SPEAKER: Mr. John D. Snoddy
DUKENET Co. Vice President of Engineering & Operations

Would you be interested in a mobile phone that gives a clear secure calls and also acts as a pager? Come listen to Mr. John D. Snoddy, DUKENET Co. Vice President of Engineering & Operations, discuss the advantages of the latest mobile phone digital technology and how DUKENET has solved the cell tower horizon clutter problem.

DATE: Tuesday, May 20, 1997

TIME: 6:00 p.m. - snack meal (\$2.00, reservation required)
6:30 p.m. - Meeting and presentation

PLACE: O.J. Miller Auditorium
Duke Power Electric Center
526 S. Church Street, Charlotte NC

PARKING: Park in the Duke Power employee lot directly behind the building. Push the communications button at the lot gate and advise the security personnel that you are planning to attend the IEEE meeting.

Reservations are requested for the meal. No reservations are required for the meeting. For reservations and additional information contact:

John Tannery at 382- 9867 or Cathy Hope at 382-8560.

NOTICE TO PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

The IEEE Charlotte Section has been approved by North Carolina as an Approved Sponsor of Continuing Professional Competency for Professional Engineers! This means you will get credit for each IEEE meeting you attend. Attending the above scheduled meeting will earn you one Professional Development Hour (PDH) toward your yearly requirement. All you need to do is bring your PE registration number and include it on the meeting sign-in sheet.

CHARLOTTE SECTION MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 14

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 11

Power Engineering Society
Annual Field Trip
Thursday, June 19

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 13

Charlotte Section Annual Picnic
Thursday, August 21

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 17

Computer Society Meeting
Monday, September 22

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 15

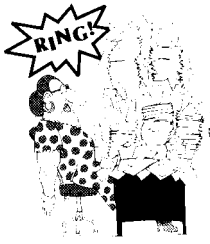
Communications Society Meeting
Tuesday, October 21

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 12

Charlotte Section Annual Banquet
Thursday, November 20

Executive Committee Meeting
Annual Planning Meeting
Wednesday, December 10

CATHY'S CHATS



"I know that phone is somewhere on this desk...I just can't find it!!!" With our busy lives these days, we don't have time to wait by the phone anticipating a call. (Some of us can't even find the phone much less answer it!) With customers wanting convenience and security, mobile phone technology is advancing. Be sure to attend this month's

Communications Society's presentation on digital communication systems.

Thanks to everyone who attended the tour of WJZY studio and members who helped judge the UNCC senior project presentations. We appreciate your support!

Another place we had great attendance was Southcon '97 held in Raleigh on March 25-26. While attending the NC Council meeting, I got a chance to "roam" around the exhibits, talk with many component suppliers and IEEE region members, try to win a television (no luck!), and make some business contacts. For the first Southcon held outside of Florida and Georgia, it was a success! This conference may be returning to Raleigh in the year 2000. We'll keep you informed.

Speaking of region activities, Southeastcon '97 was also well attended this year. It was held in Blacksburg, Virginia. This conference is a great place for members and students to mingle. I'm not sure who gets more out of it...the students or members. It's a great conference for mixing business with fun.

Fun and creativity is what the Odyssey of the Mind competition is all about. The State Tournament was held in Asheville on April 12th and included winning teams from all over North Carolina. Thanks to our members who judged the various competitions and good luck to those teams who were chosen to represent North Carolina at the World Tournament.

Coming up next month is the annual PES field trip. Don't forget to stay tuned to your Electron for details concerning this trip. Hope to see you at our future meetings! Please remember that we are always open to comments/suggestions for meeting topics or Electron articles. Call one of the Executive Committee members with any ideas.

Cathy Hope
Charlotte Section Chair

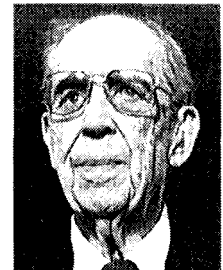
IN MEMORY OF A COLLEAGUE AND A SPECIAL FRIEND...

The Charlotte Section and the community lost one of its treasures late in 1996. Ben Martin was not only an active IEEE member but he was a loved friend and colleague.

A graduate of Clemson University, he began his engineering career with Westinghouse Corporation as a sales engineer in Pittsburgh, Pa. He moved to Charlotte in the 1940s where he became very active in the AIEE. In 1947, he was elected Secretary/Treasurer and in 1948 was elected Chairman. In 1963, Charlotte became a Section of the IEEE. Ben served as Chairman in 1965. After being Chair, Ben focused his attention on CPCC where he worked to establish a Student Branch Chapter of the IEEE. He served as an advisor and helped it to develop into the active branch it is today.

Ben retired from Westinghouse in 1968 following forty-two years of service. Following his retirement, Ben developed at his own expense a program designed to reach high school students and interest them in engineering as a career. Entitled "The Challenges and Opportunities of the Electrical Industry," this program consisted of a slide presentation with narrative highlighting the engineering aspects of the electrical industry and pointing out the exciting future open to a young person in that field. It was presented at colleges, technical institutes, high schools, and junior high schools throughout the Piedmont Carolinas area.

In addition to IEEE and educational activities, Ben was a major factor in the organization of an Engineering Explorer Post for the Boy Scouts of America. This was one of the first specialty Explorer Posts organized in the county. He was also known as "Uncle Ben" to the children at Thompson Orphanage and looked forward to the parties given for these children by the Men's Bible Class of Myers Park Presbyterian Church.



Ben Martin

Ben was a scholar, teacher, engineer, husband, and father. Most of all, he was a special friend to many of us. We miss him!

Just In Case Anyone Asks:

Margaret Thatcher became England first woman Prime Minister on May 4, 1973.....

Alan Shepard became the first American in space in 1961....

The first telegraph message was sent on May 24, 1844.....

The New York Stock Exchange was established on May 17, 1792.....

The U.S. Post Office was established on May 8, 1794....

TODAY'S ENGINEER

IEEE-USA has announced the name of its new non-technical, quarterly professional magazine for engineers, which will begin publication this fall. *Today's Engineer* will help professionals achieve more satisfying, fruitful careers by enhancing their learning opportunities, encouraging a business perspective, promoting high standards of professionalism and ethical performance, preparing for technical and general management, and raising the stature of the engineering profession in society.

ADMINISTRATION'S NEW SPACE PLAN DROPS MANNED MISSION TO MARS

The White House recently updated the National Space Policy to reflect changing circumstances and tighter budgets. The principal thrust of the revised policy, issued Sept. 19, is eliminating a manned expedition to Mars, replacing that costly venture with use of robots, "the sustained robotic exploration of Mars." Other elements of the 14-page plan include the transfer of some space activities to the private sector, development of less costly rocket technologies, consolidation of some military and civilian programs, and changes in procurement regulations for purchase of foreign launch services. The policy reiterates the U.S. commitment to development and operation of the International Space Station. Plans remain firm for construction to begin in 1997 in cooperation with Russia and other partners. The Space Station's discoveries "will support future decisions on the feasibility and desirability of conducting further human exploration activities."

The new policy orders "a sustained program to support a robotic presence on the surface of Mars by year 2000 for the purposes of scientific research, exploration and technology development." It also outlines "a long-term program, using innovative new technologies, to obtain in-situ measurements and sample returns from the celestial bodies in the solar system," as well as continued "long-term observation, research, and analysis of the earth's land, oceans, atmosphere and their interactions...."

With respect to the role of the private sector, the new policy states that government agencies should buy "commercially available space goods and services to the greatest extent feasible." It also endorses "free and fair trade in commercial space launch services," and to support this goal, the U.S. will devise a strategy "for

transitioning from negotiated trade in launch services toward a trade environment characterized by the free and open interaction of market economies." Agencies responsible for the new practices will be the U.S. Trade Representative, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the National Economic Council.

During the same September week, the House of Representatives passed legislation promoting commercial space development. The measure (HR 3936), sponsored by Rep. Robert Walker (R-Pa.), was approved by voice vote on September 18th. There was no comparable legislation in the Senate and the bill, Walker's legacy as out-going chair of the House Committee, will have to be reintroduced in the 105th Congress.

As described by Walker in floor debate, the measure aims "to improve the legal and regulatory conditions that handicap the commercial space industry." It loosens some restrictions in the Commercial Space Launch Act; it gives the Department of Transportation authority to license reentry of space vehicles from orbit, including government insurance for the reentry; it enables the DOD, under some restricted circumstances, to use private launch services; and it allows "excess" ballistic missiles to be converted to use as space transportation vehicles.

The House bill also includes language that removes barriers to allow government employees (NASA, principally) to shift to private sector shuttle contractor positions. This would, according to Rep. George Brown (D-Calif.) help "ensure the continued safe operation of our space shuttle."

Meantime, NASA was told by another House panel that its response to Congressional budget cuts and other downsizing mandates is lagging. At a hearing on September 9 of the House Government Reform Subcommittee, the General Accounting Office (GAO) suggested that NASA might achieve its force reduction aims by creating a "base closing commission." This body, according to GAO, would be similar to the one that succeeded in closing military bases and achieving reductions in force. One of its principal features was that it was a take-it-or-leave-it proposition--leaving Congress no opportunity to intervene to save bases in members' districts.

The GAO representative, Thomas J. Schultz, said that given NASA's "limited progress to date," Congress may wish to adopt the idea of setting up such a commission. He said a commission is useful in dealing "with the political sensitivity and cost issues that inevitably accompany consolidation and closure decisions."

BENEFITS ISSUES ON FRONT BURNER IN 105TH CONGRESS

After modest success in 1996 in passing employment benefits-related legislation, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the Small Business Job Protection Act, Congress is set this year to tackle other pressing benefits concerns. Here's a rundown of the major issues that are likely to see legislative action during the current session:

Health Insurance Reform: Health insurance protections for children, physician reimbursement and patient access to specialty care under managed care programs, and retiree health-care coverage are policy areas high on legislators' to-do lists.

Individual Retirement Accounts: The 1997 version of the Roth-Breaux Super-IRA bill will phase out income limits on eligibility to make tax-deductible contributions to conventional "front-loaded" IRAs by 2001 and establish new non-deductible "back-ended" IRAs, of which contributions will be taxed as income but the inside buildup of interest earnings will be tax-exempt.

Private Pensions: Lawmakers will explore ways to broaden pension coverage — especially for small-business and low-wage workers, make pensions more portable when workers change jobs, and encourage greater personal savings through tax-favored investment vehicles.

Employer-provided Educational Assistance: Legislation to extend the expired graduate-level exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance and the expiring (on May 31) undergraduate-level are pressing concerns.

Medicare Reform: President Clinton has called for some short-term changes — including the transfer of some Social Security trust funds to help shore up the system — and the creation of a bipartisan commission to come up with longer-term solutions to the Medicare crisis. Republicans in Congress are expected to agree to some modest compromises in order to keep the volatile issue off the table in the 1998 elections.

Social Security Reform: In January 1997, a bipartisan advisory council recommended three approaches to reform, two of which call for individual investment-account privatization. Observers believe there's a good chance this Congress or the next will act to maintain solvency without making major changes in benefits.

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ELECTRON ARTICLES & COMMENTS

Send articles for publication and newsletter comments and corrections to me at Duke Power Co.-EC12R, P.O. Box 1006, Charlotte NC 28201-1006, p.colaianni@ieee.org or 704/382-5632/-0368 Fax. —R.Paul Colaianni, *ELECTRON* Editor

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