IEEE Rochester Section

Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society Chapter Event

Tuesday, February 17th, 2015 @ 6:00 PM

6 – 7 PM: Networking (pizza and refreshments will be served)
7 – 8 PM: Featured speaker

Rochester BioVenture Center
77 Ridgeland Rd
Rochester NY 14623

SPEAKER:

Carl Helmers, PhD
Rochester, NY 14642
Webpage: helmers.com

<u>TITLE:</u> The Story of Byte Magazine: Its creator & first editor's reflections on how PCs came to be ...

Bio: Carl grew up in Florham Park, New Jersey. As a high school senior in December 1965, Carl (with math/science student colleagues) got a chance to take a Fortran course every Wednesday evening at Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in East Hanover. From that point onward Carl knew he wanted his own *personal* computer. Carl worked for Sandoz summers (and vacations) while at the University of Rochester where he earned his 1970 BS physics "with distinction." In 1973, he began to publish his "quarterly" *Experimenter's Computer Systems* pamphlets. He published several ECS issues in 1974 through May 1975. He did this before modern word-processing programs – just his ancient film ribbon electric typewriter, hand drawn ink on paper graphics and occasional trips to a quick printer in nearby Boston. *ECS* became **BYTE** magazine in September 1975 in Peterborough, New Hampshire. After leaving **BYTE** at the end of 1980, Carl formed Helmers Publishing Inc. in Peterborough NH. Through Helmers Publishing Inc. Carl founded controlled-circulation trade publications *Bar Code News* (*ID Systems* magazine,) *Sensors* magazine and *Desktop Engineering* magazine. Carl moved to the Rochester NY area in 2006. Carl keeps his Fedora and Mint Linux workstations / distributions up to date. Carl reads the Linux User Group of Rochester e-mail list traffic and usually attends meetings. Carl chose helmers.com as his personal domain name in the 1980s so his e-mail address could be "carl@helmers.com". Current activities include divers WWW readings, woodworking projects, practicing his piano and travels with his scientist wife Jean Bidlack, PhD, who is the University of Rochester's Paul Stark Professor of Pharmacology.

<u>ABSTRACT:</u>

Carl Helmers had a long entrepreneurial career founding and publishing advertising-supported print technical magazines. He was a founder, editor and minority co-owner of the world's first successful personal computer print magazine publication, BYTE, from 1975 until 1980. This talk will be his account – 40 years later --- of how the microcomputer hackers of the world in their pursuit of knowledge about a coming technology created the roots of today's ubiquitous personal computing and mobile technology. It all came down to "I want my own personal computer – even if I have to figure out how to make one, then build and program it myself..." As in any market trend, many others were moving in the same direction as Carl. One thing led to another. Carl will summarize the story of how his BYTE magazine sprang forth upon the pre-WWW paper magazine world of 1975 – long before the clone friendly IBM PC in 1981.