



Montana Section News

November, 2004

Chair's Message

Ross Snider

It has been interesting following the Linux saga where SCO is suing IBM, Novell, AutoZone, DaimlerChrysler, and Red Hat claiming that Linux is derived from UNIX, which they hold the rights to, having acquired them from AT&T. What they are after is licensing fees from anyone using Linux. Apparently they had an investment to the tune of \$50 million from BayStar which is a capital firm that appears to invest in companies that haven't been enforcing their intellectual property. They then enforce the IP to drive up value. There is rumor that this approach (or the introduction between the companies) came from Microsoft. Anyway, this appears to be a losing battle for SCO and BayStar is trying to recoup their investment as SCO's stock price has fallen from ~\$20 to ~\$3. This outcome has enormous implications for open source software and will be the first real legal test of open source licensing terms related to Linux. However, IBM's legal team is fighting for the open source crowd, which unfortunately for SCO (to the delight of the open source movement) is like trying to stop a battleship head on with a rowboat. OK, I might be exaggerating a bit and be biased toward the open source crowd. Anyway, a good site to keep up to date on this saga can be found at www.groklaw.net.

The November meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on the 18th at the Northwestern Energy Building. Speakers will be ECE students presenting their senior design projects that are being sponsored by the Section.

Did You Know

From last month's Did You Know. Murphy of Murphy's Law was an EE. Captain Edward Aloysius Murphy was Major John Paul Stapp's trouble shooting engineer in 1949 when Stapp's second rocket sled experiment failed to produce any data.* (Stapp was collecting data that was eventually used in the design of low altitude ejection systems.) Murphy investigated and found that the instrumentation had been installed "backward". He reported to Stapp that: "If there's more than one way to do a job and one of those ways will end up in disaster, then someone will do it that way." Stapp condensed this for the visiting press as: "If something can go wrong, it will."

*Reference: "Murphy Makes No Mistak", Kiwanis Magazine, June-July, 1997.

Influence Future Engineers

The IEEE Educational Activities Board has several resources available to members that focus on pre-college students, teachers and guidance counselors. The Educational Activities Board Teacher In-Service Program features IEEE Section volunteers developing and presenting technologically oriented subject matter to local pre-college educators in an in-service or professional development setting. The focus on local school districts is a key feature to this program as local engineers and educators can develop long lasting collaborations. Educational Activities has converted fifteen activities from the Teacher In-Service Program into complete lesson plans in English and Spanish that teachers and volunteers can use in classrooms. Each lesson is aligned with education standards, and includes teacher summaries, student worksheets, and activities. For more information, go to

<http://www.ieee.org/organizations/eab/precollege/tispt>.

Section Officers and Executive Committee

Chair

Ross Snider

rosss@ece.montana.edu

406-994-1645

Chair-elect

???

& Vice Chair

Sec'y/Treas.

Brett Swimley

brett.swimley@aedinc.net

406-585-8892x16

PACE & GOLD Chair

Jason Kay

jasonkay@aedinc.net

406-585-8892

Pre-College Education Committee Chair & Student Branch Advisor

Ross Snider

rosss@ee.montana.edu

406-994-1645

Membership Development Committee Chair

Jason Daugenbaugh

jasond@ieee.org

406-585-8892x15

Section SM Nominating Committee Chair

Don Pierre

Pierre_Don@ieee.org

406-587-4065

Moose Call Editor & SAMIeee Recipient

Bill Jameson

b.jameson@ieee.org

406-994-5970/586-0280

Student Branch Chair

Calvin Coopmans

cal@forg.net

406-556-1375