

❖ Consultants in Minnesota ❖

September 1997

Presidents Letter

by Ray J. Giske

Having just returned from a 5-day sailing trip to the Apostle Islands in Lake Superior, I find it somewhat difficult to get back into the swing of things. There is no doubt about the fact that summer is winding down with the Labor Day week-end just around the corner.

This year's sailing excursion (it's basically an annual event) was more interesting than most since the boat provided an example of "technology run amok". The sailing weather was some of the finest we have had in the last few years; warm with steady winds. The boat, a 36' Islander, handled well in spite of the fact that it was early 80s vintage. The owner of the boat has equipped it with a substantial amount of electronic gadgetry including Loran, differential GPS, radar, etc. which was part of its appeal when we (myself and three sailing partners) were trying to decide which of the many boats in the fleet

we wanted to charter.

We anticipated the boarding with more than the usual amount eagerness looking forward to operating the "toys" even though our itinerary would not take us outside of the Islands themselves. After stowing our gear and having dinner the night before departure, we settled in to amaze of blips, beeps, digital read-outs, flashing indicators, warning buzzers, etc., etc. Our eagerness was tempered somewhat with the finding that the differential GPS appeared not to be calibrated and was giving us readings somewhere out beyond the islands when we were still at the dock. Undaunted, we left the dock the following morning only to find that the Loran didn't operate correctly with the engine running although it seemed OK under sail. Furthermore, the dual sets of knot meter, depth finder, and wind indicators did not provide identical readings; in fact, the differences in the readings could vary

depending on the magnitude of the reading. Without knowing the owner of the boat (we had made all the arrangements through the charter master), it seemed the owner had become enamored with gadgets but was unable to keep up with the maintenance required by all of it.

On the other hand, we found that the basic equipment for sailing had received even less attention than the electronics. For example, the main sail traveller was found extremely difficult to move. However, a quick shot of WD-40 improved it substantially although additional repair would be appropriate. While the boom vang was available on the boat, no appropriate place was found at the foot of the mast to attach it although an appropriate location was found on the boom. In the collective judgment of the crew, the owners efforts had clearly gone toward installing and enhancing the electronics on the boat and not toward the most basic needs of a sailing vessel.

Because the other three crew members have also had experience in acquiring and applying information

technology, we were quick to draw parallels between our experience on the boat and our experience in the work place. It seems that all too often information systems and the associated technology are long on the gadgets, the 'toys', and the 'electronics' but way short on the fundamental tools and features which serve the primary purposes of the system. Another parallel that can be drawn is that any system (information or sailing) must be maintained. When the complexity and the technology increase to the extent that maintenance cannot be adequately provided we end up with three classes of equipment (as we did on the and is boat);

1. it works useful,
2. it would be useful if it worked, and
3. irrelevant.

The final parallel is one which, it seems, I need to be reminded of again and again. That is; no matter how good it looks on paper, the real value can only be realized under operational conditions.

Officers:

President: Ray Giske

Voice (612) 861-6054
email RGiske@compuserve.com

VicePresident: Gordon Schesel

Voice (612)293-3695
email 103011.3513@Compuserve.com

Treasurer: Sheridan Timms

Voice (612) 937-2364
email DJVY54A@prodigy.com

Secretary: Ben Moyle

Voice (612) 933-2885
Fax (612)933-7764

Editor: Magne A. Hatlevik

Voice (612)631-1731
email DNFD92A@prodigy.com

Newsletter
of the

I
C
C
A
®
INDEPENDENT
COMPUTER
CONSULTANTS
ASSOCIATION



Minnesota Chapter

Why did the chicken cross the road?

By: Joan Barnes <jebarnes@igc.apc.org>

We've heard that a million monkeys at a million keyboards could produce the Complete Works of Shakespeare; now, thanks to the Internet, we know this is not true.

Why did the chicken cross the road?

Kindergarten teacher: To get to the other side.

Plato: For the greater good.

Aristotle: It is the nature of chickens to cross roads.

Karl Marx: It was a historical inevitability.

Timothy Leary: Because that's the only kind of trip the Establishment would let it take.

Nietzsche: Because if you gaze too long across the Road, the Road also gazes at you.

Albert Einstein: Whether the chicken crossed the road or the road crossed the chicken depends upon your frame of reference.

Buddha: If you ask this question, you deny your own chicken-nature.

Ernest Hemmingway: To die. In the rain.

Mark Twain: The news of its crossing has been greatly exaggerated.

Andersen Consulting: Deregulation of the chicken's side of the road was threatening its dominant market position. The chicken was faced with significant challenges to create and develop the competencies required for the newly competitive market. Andersen Consulting, in a partnering relationship with the client, helped the chicken by rethinking its physical distribution strategy and implementation processes. Using the Poultry Integration Model (PIM) Andersen helped the chicken use its skills, methodologies, knowledge capital, and experiences to align the chicken's people, processes and technology in support of its overall strategy within a Program Management framework. Andersen Consulting convened a diverse broad-spectrum of road analysts and best chickens along with the Andersen consultants with deep skills in the transportation industry to engage in a two-day itinerary of meetings in order to leverage their

personal knowledge capital, both tacit and explicit, and to enable them to synergize with each other in order to achieve the implicit goals of delivering and successfully architecting and implementing an enterprise-wide value framework across the continuum of poultry cross-media processes. The meeting was held in a park-like setting enabling and creating an impactful environment which was strategically based, industry focused, and built upon a consistent, clear, and unified market message and aligned with the chicken's mission, vision, and core values. This was conducive towards the creation of a total business integration solution. Andersen Consulting helped the chicken change to become more successful.



A N INTERNET CLASS

By: "Jerry Stiff" <stiff001@maroon.tc.umn.edu>

Jane Bersie has attended the Internet class at Hennepin Technical College. She recommends it for ICCA people who need some skills there. HTC: 425-3800

LOW COST TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Two "hot" courses are available in the evenings at Century College. I attended Internet in 1994 and HTML in 1997. I recommend each course. There is plenty of hands-on computer time. Each course raised me from neophyte to adequate.

The instructor - Clarence Netwal - is a telecommunications engineer who teaches about a topic which is his "fun."

Internet: "The Information Superhighway"
\$89, 4 Tuesdays, Sep 23 - Oct 14

HTML: Language of the Internet World Wide Web
\$89, 4 Tuesdays Oct 21 - Nov 18

Century College, on Century Ave north of I-694. 779-3341

Wrap-up of the August program:

by Gordon Schesel (103011.3513@Compuserve.com)

The August monthly program focused on self improvement and we were treated to a double feature presentation; that is two presentations—one on the Dale Carnegie Training opportunities and the other on the benefits of being a member of the Toastmasters International Educational Program.

Robin Engstrom, of Norman & Associates, Edina, spoke to us about the Continuous Improvement opportunities offered by the **Dale Carnegie Training** seminars. Perhaps you have all heard of "The Dale Carnegie Course" which has been their most popular and the flagship course of their organization. They have six others; all benefiting you personally as well as in the business world. The key benefits include:

- Expand self confidence
- Enhance communication and memorization skills
- Be a better listener
- Maintain a positive attitude, control stress
- Learn creative problem solving and decision-making techniques
- Improve business and customer relationships
- How to handle difficult selling situations
- Applying proven leadership principles
- Make high impact presentations

And then part two: **Ted Carlson** spoke to us about **Toastmasters International**. Toastmasters is a means for you and I to *develop* our communication and leadership skills and achieve our individual goal of becoming a *better* communicator.

This educational program is the heart of the Toastmasters Club. To benefit, you should understand the program and use it to set learning goals based on your needs. The program is divided into two tracks—a communication track and a leadership track. The communication track is the major part of the system—almost all new members join Toastmasters for the benefits this track offers.

This organization is a series of local clubs which meet weekly usually, meeting times and dates are different at each club, so seek out the club which fits your schedule. A small investment of your time, a one hour weekly meeting that reaps major personal and professional rewards. Look for a club in your vicinity; I have a list of Midwest clubs; call me and I can help you find one you will like.



"An actual article found in the packaging material of a SCSI drive....." (Supposedly)

By: "William B. Smale" <smale002@gold.tc.umn.edu>

IMPORTANT! READ THIS BEFORE USING YOUR NEW DEVICE

Congratulations! You have purchased an extremely fine device that would give you thousands of years of trouble-free service, except that you undoubtedly will destroy it via some typical bonehead consumer maneuver. Which is why we ask you to:

PLEASE FOR GOD'S SAKE READ THIS OWNER'S MANUAL CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU UNPACK THE DEVICE. YOU ALREADY UNPACKED IT, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU UNPACKED IT AND PLUGGED IT IN AND TURNED IT ON AND FIDDLED WITH THE KNOBS, AND NOW YOUR CHILD, THE SAME CHILD WHO ONCE SHOVED A POLISH SAUSAGE INTO YOUR VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER AND SET IT ON "FAST FORWARD", THIS CHILD ALSO IS FIDDLING WITH THE KNOBS, RIGHT? WE MIGHT AS WELL JUST BREAK THESE DEVICES RIGHT AT THE FACTORY BEFORE WE SHIP THEM OUT, YOU KNOW THAT?!?

We're sorry. We just get a little crazy sometimes because we're always getting back "defective" merchandise where it turns out that the consumer inadvertently bathed the device in acid for six days. So, in writing these instructions, we naturally tend to assume that your skull is filled with dead insects, but we mean nothing by it.

OK? Now let's talk about:

1. UNPACKING THE DEVICE

The device is encased in foam to protect it from the Shipping People, who like nothing more than to jab spears into outgoing boxes.

PLEASE INSPECT THE CONTENTS CAREFULLY FOR GASHS OR IDA MAE BARKER'S ENGAGEMENT RING, WHICH SHE LOST LAST WEEK, AND SHE THINKS MAYBE IT WAS WHILE SHE WAS PACKING DEVICES.

Ida Mae really wants that ring back, because it is her only proof of engagement, and her fiancée, Stuart, is now seriously considering backing out on the whole thing in as much as he had consumed most of a bottle of Jim Beam in Quality Control when he decided to pop the question. It is not without irony that Ida Mae's last name is "Barker", if you get our drift.

WARNING: DO NOT EVER AS LONG AS YOU LIVE THROW AWAY THE BOX OR ANY OF THE PIECES OF STYROFOAM, EVEN THE LITTLE ONES SHAPED LIKE PEANUTS.

If you attempt to return the device to the store, and you are missing one single peanut, the store personnel will laugh in the chilling manner exhibited by Joseph Stalin just after he enslaved Eastern Europe.

Besides the device, the box should contain:

*Eight little rectangular snippets of paper that say **"WARNING"**

*A little plastic packet containing four 5/17 inch pilfer grommets and two club-ended 6/93 inch boxcar prawns.

YOU WILL NEED TO SUPPLY: a matrix wrench and 60,000 feet of tram cable.

IF ANYTHING IS DAMAGED OR MISSING: You **IMMEDIATELY** should turn to your spouse and say "Margaret, you know why this country can't make a car that can get all the way through the drive-through at urgering without a major transmission overhaul? Because nobody cares, that's why."

WARNING: This is assuming your spouse's name is Margaret. And not Pete.

2. PLUGGING IN THE DEVICE

The plug on this device represents the latest thinking of the electrical industry's Plug Mutation Group, which, in a continuing effort to prevent consumers from causing hazardous electrical current to flow through their appliances, developed the Three-Pronged Plug, then the Plug Where One Prong is Bigger Than The Other. Your device is equipped with the revolutionary new Plug Whose Prongs Consist of Six Small Religious Figurines Made of Chocolate.

DO NOT TRY TO PLUG IT IN!

Lay it gently on the floor near an outlet, but out of direct sunlight, and clean it weekly with a damp handkerchief.

WARNING: WHEN YOU ARE LAYING THE PLUG ON THE FLOOR, DO NOT HOLD A SHARP OBJECT IN YOUR OTHER HAND AND TRIP OVER THE CORD AND POKE YOU EYE OUT, AS THIS COULD VOID THE WARRANTY.

3. OPERATION OF THE DEVICE

WARNING: WE MANUFACTURE ONLY THE ATTRACTIVE DESIGNER CASE. THE ACTUAL WORKING CENTRAL PARTS OF THE DEVICE ARE MANUFACTURED IN JAPAN. THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE TRANSLATED BY MRS. SHIRLEY PELTWATER OF ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE, WHO HAS NEVER ACTUALLY BEEN TO JAPAN BUT DOES HAVE MOST OF "SHOGUN" ON TAPE.

INSTRUCTIONS: For results that can be the finest, it is our advising that: **NEVER** to hold these buttons two times!! Except the battery. Next taking the (something) earth section may cause a large occurrence! However. If this is not a trouble, such rotation is a very maintenance action, as a kindly (something) viewpoint from Drawing B.

4. WARRANTY

Be it hereby known that his device, together with but not excluding all those certain parts thereunto, shall be warranted against all defects, failures and malfunctions as shall occur between now and Thursday afternoon shortly before 2:00, during which time the Manufacturer will, at no charge to the Owner, send the device to our Service People, who will emerge from their caves and engage in rituals designed to cleanse it of evil spirits. This warranty does not cover the attractive designer case.



Meeting Reservations: Members may phone your reservation to Joan Barnes' office at 257-2570, by 3:00 PM, Friday, September 12. Non-members should mail this form to ICCA Minnesota, c/o Sheridan Timms, 6940 Tartan Curve, Eden Prairie, MN 55346.

Name: _____ Company: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
State: _____ Phone: () _____

The Lido Italian Buffet Members \$20 - Non-members \$23 x _____ = _____
Enclosed is a check for: _____



Next Meeting

ICCA Benefits

Tuesday, September 16

Italian Deli by Lido

**North of Ct. Rd. C on Snelling Ave
Roseville**

Social Hour begin at 5:30PM
Dinner is at 6:30PM

For reservations call Joan Barnes @ 257-2570

FUTURE MEETINGS

Wed Oct. 15: Wyndham
t.b.a

September Meeting: Member Report Card on ICCA Benefits

By Bill McTeer <wmcteer@mcteersys.com>

Does the ICCA have member benefits you should be using? If you are like most of us, you don't know. National Office periodically sends descriptions of benefits which end up in your "get around to it" stack for followup which never happens. This meeting will help jumpstart your thinking by providing a panel of members who have actually researched specific benefits and will report on their findings, positive or negative. This meeting is also planned to be specially publicized for prospective members.



I INDEPENDENT
C COMPUTER
C CONSULTANTS
A ASSOCIATION
®

5788 Lincoln Drive
Edina, MN 55436

Stamp

First Class Mail

