

# ❖ Consultants in Minnesota ❖

September 1999

## President's Message

By Gordon Schesel

The 35<sup>th</sup> **Northwest Computer Show** and Conference is Sept 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Some of our members are investing time on one or both days in "manning" the booth. Our ICCA booth will be set up in Aisle 600 at position B612.

Our mission is to inform interested and potential new members of the many tangible benefits of membership in a national organization of computer consulting professionals. To other attendees who are corporate IT managers, our mission is to promote the ICCA as a source of contract/consulting professionals who are available to provide a valuable cost effective service. This is part of our efforts to promote "brand awareness" and name recognition of the ICCA.

Champion Productions of Burnsville is producing the show this year for the first time. Champion also produces the annual Strictly Business Computer Show which we also co-sponsor and participate in.

This could be an opportunity to add a new customer or two to your customer base and maybe also find some potential new members for our chapter.

Our monthly meeting this past month was very well attended. The topic was the **Linux** operating system and was presented by **Jeremy White** whose company is **CodeWeavers**. Linux is popular because of its low cost (free), powerful features and high degree of reliability. I know of only one other Apparently this was a topic that piqued a lot of interest in the many members and guests who turned out. We need to plan more such up and coming technology topics in the future.

Speaking of meeting topics—let's be thinking about this and jotting some ideas down for suggested topics when you see the request

for topic suggestions in an upcoming Newsletter. There are many computer technology professionals or others with a knowledge, skill or service that would be of interest to our group. Some may even be acquaintances of yours. If you just ask them, I know they will probably be willing to present to our group. "If you ask, they will come".

You may already be familiar with the **Contract Professional** magazine. A one year subscription is \$30 and it's a must for IT contractors and consultants. They also have a website...www.cpuniverse.com. Go to cpuniverse.com/jobs/projects.shtml. You will find some good news on project management as a contractor. **Christopher Kenneally** calls the article 'Project Management: Do You Have the Right Stuff?' Demand for contract project managers and their double edged skills is growing according to one technical staffing service in Seattle. You can understand why. An IT contractor is probably highly technical with a lot of years of experience. He/she is also able to participate in a software project as both a manager and a team member. Mr. Kenneally is a freelance business write based in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. It made my day! I have a printed copy of the article for anyone who wishes.

**See you on the 16<sup>th</sup> at the Wyndham.**

### Officers:

**President:** Gordon Schesel

Voice (651) 429-8280

email 103011.3513@compuserve.com

**VicePresident:** Larry J. Bremer

Voice (612) 553-1994

Fax (612) 553-9094

email LJBremer@Compuserve.com

**Treasurer:** Roger Montague

Voice (612) 545-7993

Fax (612) 546-3114

email rogermon@minn.net

**Secretary:** Ben Moyle

Voice (612) 933-2885

Fax (612) 933-7764

email bmoyle@bimoyle.com

**Editor:** Magne A. Hatlevik

Voice (651) 636-3678

email magne@magpcs.com

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Newsletter  
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Minnesota Chapter

# Sept



**Cisco Systems To Present In September**

By Bill Buending

Cisco Systems, world leader in networking for the Internet, is the scheduled speaker for the September 16 meeting. Actually a person and not the entire the company will be speaking, but as this is written, that person has yet to be identified.

Somewhere in the 1998 Cisco Annual Report, it states "Virtually all of the information on the Internet travels across the systems of one company - Cisco Systems." While I didn't find PCs or telephone wire in the Cisco Products Quick Reference Guide, I did find routers and access products, switches and hubs, security products, Internet products, ATM products, and network management products. So maybe Cisco didn't create the entire "information super highway." They certainly have most of the access points, interchanges, traffic controls, bypasses, and high-speed lanes covered. The April version of the Products Guide ran 179 pages. I just received the August edition and it is 189 pages in length.

Do you have the Cisco Consultant Program Resource Kit? You do if you responded to the April letter from Lisa Bloom inviting you to join Cisco's Consultant Program, or if you met with Pam Ferguson at the Conference and filled out the application on her Laptop. Quite a collection of stuff. In addition to the Products Quick Reference Guide, there were five CDs (Consultant Tools, Cisco Product Essentials, Sales Tools Central, Cisco Business Essentials - Small to Medium Business, and Cisco Interactive Mentor), two workbooks with skills tests to train the consultant in the material covered by the CDs, a pamphlet on Cisco Certifications, and the Cisco Press Product Guide. And a mouse pad.

In the quarterly update package I just received, I found update CDs for Consultant Tools and Sales Tools Central, a Product Catalog CD, and a two CD Documentation set. There was also the August Products Quick Reference Guide, the CiscoLink newsletter, and a smattering of hardcopy

product information. They are certainly going in the right direction for supporting their consultant and reseller partners. So far, I've managed to understand the CD installation instructions. What I find when I get in there should be a piece of cake, right?

If you zip out to [www.cisco.com](http://www.cisco.com) and select "About Cisco" at the bottom of the home page and then "Company Overview", you will run across (somewhere on those web pages) one of two counters increasing rapidly before your very eyes. I say "two counters," because I went out there three times and twice the counters were different. (The third time I couldn't find either counter.) The first counter I saw was "Global revenue since 1996," which was at \$87,351,350,000 and increasing by a dollar about every tenth of a second. The second counter I saw was "Internet Users," at 137,958,350 and increasing by a user about every fifth of a second. View either of these counters for anything more than thirty seconds and you start to get claustrophobia, drowning in dollar bills or being trampled by people. Try it. You might get some other counter entirely. Or not.

While I was out there, I looked up Investor Stuff (they have a better name for it.) On 8/25/99 at 5:26 PM, the stock price was \$68-5/8. One year ago, it was \$34, and last September was about \$23. Had you listened to your spouse or significant other and dumped the whole cookie jar into Cisco, you could be contemplating early retirement. Unless, of course, you have also been day-trading on-line and have just chased Zorg E-Zip Wunderkind down, down, down....("E" stands for electronic or easy or e-c-c-ch, while "Zip" is the total earnings since the IPO plus projected earnings for the next whatever.)

I'll make no attempt here to explain the Cisco Consultant Program. Or any of their hardware/software networking solutions. That is one of the things I've asked the speaker to cover. Plan to come out September 16. We'll be at the Wyndham Gardens Hotel, 4460 W. 78th Street, in Bloomington. It should be an informative session.

The April Products Quick Reference Guide ran 179 pages in seven section.

**Meet visitor Nick Kroening**

By Larry Bremer

Nick Kroening, is nephew of Jerry Stiff and attended the meeting as a guest. Nick is a student and has a day job. At the day job, he has been drafted as network administrator on a Windows 98 / NT configuration. If you are in the right place at the right time, a "for free" job will show up. On his own computer, he practices with LINUX. This meeting's topics were up the right alley. His studies are in math and science. His other interests include German and making music. He has been to German language camps and looks forward to visiting Europe. He plays piano and guitar. "Give me a command prompt over a GUI any day," he says.

**"In demand" skill sets**Source: Computerworld's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Skill Survey

1	Progress (development tool)
2	Centura (Gupta) SQL Windows
3	Novell GroupWise
3	GEAC (Dun & Bradstreet)
5	J. D. Edwards
5	Data warehousing/data mining
7	Oracle Developer 2000
8	Oracle (database management tool)
8	SAP
10	Lawson
11	Baan
11	ActiveX
13	PowerBuilder
13	MVS
15	Decision-support systems
16	Oracle
16	HP-UX
17	Electronic commerce
18	Visual C++
18	WAN-wise
20	APPC
21	Internet development tools
21	Java
21	Visual Basic
24	Cobol
24	Visual J++

## Jeremy White Stumps for Linux

By: Scott Aamodt

A large turnout of ICCA membership and guests greeted August's main presentation by Jeremy White of CodeWeavers, who spoke on the Linux operating system phenomenon. White is President of CodeWeavers, a locally based software house specializing in porting Windows software to the Linux OS.

Jeremy gave an excellent introduction to the Linux market by offering a brief Linux history. By correlating the rise of Linux to Internet usage growth and the open source movement, Jeremy spoke of an OS market ripe for change as legacy proprietary software is challenged by open community source alternatives like Linux. He further attributed the ascent of Linux to founder Linus Torvald's freeware vision and the success of Apache Web Server, which created a complementary OS need.

Among other interesting facts, White noted that Torvald's "freeware" definition relates to "source code freely available", not the often assumed "free acquisition cost". He pointed out that RedHat Linux, a popular bundling, is both sold by RedHat and is available as a free download from their website. In addition, both other Linux variants and Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) such as GNOME are widely available.

In summarizing how Linux is currently used, White revealed "early adopter" commercial customers such as tool developers and application software products. He is confident the end user application server market (web hosting, database servers, etc) for Linux will grow dramatically at the expense of competitive products such as Windows NT Server.

As for the future, Jeremy envisions the Linux desktop becoming more mainstream through integration into low priced consumer driven applications. He stated, "The turning point will come when I can run all my favorite (desktop) applications (on Linux). We're not there yet- Windows still provides a better user experience- but we're improving all the time with things like GNOME..." Also mentioned were recent independent laboratory tests of Windows NT versus Linux as an application server. Linux initially fell short, but after a quick 4-way SMP patch compared favorably to the legacy favorite.

In closing White highlighted possible opportunities for the ICCA membership in Linux consulting, especially in the installation and maintenance segments. Stating "Linux is still not an end user friendly system", he sees robust market demand from small businesses getting started with Linux as an application server. This market should grow as Linux matures into the enterprise arena, and the growing support of companies such as IBM, HP, Compaq, and others brings additional credibility to the upstart OS from the web.

"Thanks, Jeremy!" from the attending ICCA membership and guests for sharing your Linux expertise and insights with us. We'll keep a keen eye on future Linux and CodeWeavers developments...

### Visitors at the ICCA Minnesota meeting August 18, 1999

A hearty welcome to our visitors at the ICCA meeting August 18, 1999. We all hope you will visit again and become part of our association:

*Guests attending:*

- Nick Koenig
- Harold Fortuin
- John Brinkman
- Robert C. Kelsey
- Scott Aamodt
- Marissa Bremer (Larry's daughter)
- Jeremy White (the speaker)



Meeting Reservations: Members may phone your reservation to Joan Barnes at 651-257-2570, **by 3:00 PM, Tuesday, September 14, 1999.** Non-members should mail this form to: ICCA Minnesota, c/o Roger Montague, 2738 Winnetka Ave. N, New Hope, MN 55427.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Menu Selections: Baked Cod or Pork Chop      Members \$20 Non-members \$23 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check for: \_\_\_\_\_



# Next Meeting

**Thursday, September 16, 1999**

**CISCO**

**Wyndham Garden Hotel**

4460 W 78th St. Circle  
(612) 831-3131

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

For reservations call  
Joan Barnes @ 651-257-2570

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Tues. October 19 - Lido  
Wed November 17 - Wyndham

Feb, Apr, Jul,

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