

MARCH – APRIL 2001

THE BROADBAND REVOLUTION

Rapid communications and web site browsing, system operation and easy maintenance has almost dictated that reps find a reliable, fast, broadband service for their operation. Here are some observations for your consideration.

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Several solutions are available, including Cable, DSL and Wireless Broadband. All have limitations and restrictions one must adjust to. **First and foremost, it has to be available.**

Generally speaking, for the home/small business market (where all but the largest reps fit) Cable appears to be the best overall solution. Unfortunately, cable modems are not available in very many (Cont.Pg 2)



We were saddened by the passing of an old friend of ERA, Ray Del Bucchia, Friday, March 16, 2001. This picture, taken during the All Industry Party in December, characterizes the always-smiling Ray we remember.

Ray was a Life member, a Past President (1967), and National White Pin Member. He received the Lebell-Logan Award, the National Honor Award as well as the Don Larsen Award issued by WESCON where he gave many years of service. Ray had been ill for some time and succumbed to complications following open-heart surgery.

Ray was a native San Franciscan, having moved to Danville 21 years ago. A WWII Army veteran, Ray was a rep for 50 years. He was a member of Crow Canyon Country Club, SIRS, ERA and supportive member of Epiphany and Our Lady of Mercy parishes. In retirement, Ray enjoyed his five adoring grandchildren, traveling and golf. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Rita; three loving daughters; Denese Bucchianeri, Rene'e (Harold) Bucchaineri and Elaine (Kent) Screechfield. His love and kindness touched us all.

(Cont. from Pg.1) areas and cable companies are not noted for their level of interest in customers. In some areas, too many folks are signing up. In spite of the ads you see on TV, the “slowdown” of service in peak hours doesn’t seem to bother the small business that has a location where cable is available. The rep’s usage peak is not usually that of the local home user. But, the slowdown is a reality in some locations.

DSL, the Digital Subscriber Line, is a very flexible service, allowing users to pick and choose their desired speed (bandwidth) and the related costs. Again, there is the limitation brought on by your location. You must be within roughly 2 miles of a telephone company switch station in order to get it. Further, as your relative location within those 2 miles gets farther away, closer to the outer limit, the amount of bandwidth you can get is reduced. On the fringes, DSL is barely better than a regular 56K modem, if you can get it at all.

For many, the biggest single advantage to DSL is that it is on all the time. You can call up a customer’s web site while you are talking to them, read selected pages and give an instant response while you are talking. There is no time limitation on how long you can work on line. It is great!

Unfortunately, the entire DSL industry is now in a state of transition that has many of their customers fighting to stay on line. Early on, the

number of DSL suppliers (The ISP’s or hosts) proliferated. All they had to do was rent a few servers, set up some telemarketers in a room, and viola, they were a company!

Well, there were a *few* other things they had to do – like rent space, set up collection arrangements, and get all the support techs they needed. Meanwhile, the various telephone companies in the game dictated pricing and they were (surprise!) low. Making money for the independents was not easy, to say the least.

Their success, or lack of it, at getting all this going properly has prompted several class action suits and a web site, www.patheticbell.com

Enterprising people like Northpoint, Covad and later, Rhythm saw an easy solution in that they could sell the DSL service lines and not have to worry with customers. This concept is so successful that Northpoint is now in Chapter 11 (now *gone*, we understand), Covad has laid off a bunch of people and their stock has tanked, and Rhythm is now in the lay-off mode. *Their* customers are the afore-mentioned ISP’s and the ISP’s are in trouble.

Pacific Bell proceeded at will, setting up DSL service for whoever would buy it. Since such service has to come in over a standard phone line, why not sell it all? Their success, or lack of it, at getting all this going properly has prompted several class action suits and a web site, www.patheticbell.com that documents their many challenges. The web site name tells it all.

**ERA NEWS
NCALERA NEWS**

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Edited by R.W. (Bob) Parsons

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**MEETINGS &
SPECIAL EVENTS**

- April 3 Michaels at Shoreline Regular meeting
- April 21-25 ERA Marketing & Mgmt. Conf.
- June 5 Michaels at Shoreline Regular meeting

DON'T FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR THE UP-COMING ERA CONFERENCE IN MONTERREY - APRIL 21-25.

We cannot hope to answer all the technical questions surrounding this effort. We are not even certain *they* really understand it! But, the DSL service fits between the ISP's server and your router. The signal is superimposed on top of a standard twisted pair telephone line. The router, supplied by the DSL supplier (at an extra cost, of course!) demodulates the signal and feeds it into your browser.

For those who have forgotten, modulator and demodulator are the functions from which the common term, "modem," is derived.

Wireless Broadband is the newest, final option and the one that is growing the fastest. An antenna installed on your roof handles both the in-coming and outgoing signals. The primary transmitter-receiver is located at a high point near the major market. (In our case, a mountain in Milpitas.)

The signal is fed down to a different kind of router, often called simply a modem, and then into your computer. Transmit and receive frequencies are in the 25GHz range, so the antenna, pictured above, is quite small.



Upload and download signal strengths are not symmetrical. Probably because the incoming signal is transmitted at a much higher real

power than that you send back from your roof. Trees in the signal path, for instance, can affect your signal, making your up-load speed much slower than that of the down load.

Wireless generally gets good marks from those who respond to the surveys put out by such web sites as www.dslreports.com. Browse that site and you will be able to read first hand about the troubles in this industry. Pay particular attention to the “death watch” link on the top right side of their home page.

Is DSL for everyone? Not according to David Coursey, Executive Editor, AnchorDesk on ZDNet. In his article, “Say no to broadband? Nine warning signs that it's not for you,” He gives some very solid reasons why it may not be. (Mr. Coursey's article is also available on www.dslreports.com.)

Is it going away? Not on your life! The local telco, Pacific Bell, is busting their tomato cans trying to get fiber optic cable spread all over their market so that they can eliminate some of their challenges and sell more DSL. Five will get you ten that when this is all settled, the prices will go up!

Also on the site, if you look hard enough, is a Forbes reprint that talks about the coming telecom revolution, *Voice-Over DSL*. Do you think that this will do anything but encourage the telco's to encourage the cleaning up of their DSL challenges?

In fact, reports are beginning to get more favorable around Pacific Bell's service in general. They are still pretty messed up, but a loooong way from a few weeks ago!

Generally speaking, the larger the company you deal with, the harder it is to get service. In all three of the examples mentioned so far, you must depend upon *two* companies, in most cases. With DSL, for instance, your ISP is your direct contact and the Covads of the world are in the background. If you are dealing with Pacific Bell, then you have two *departments* – the regular Hosting group (ISP) and the DSL department. And believe me, in most all cases, the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing and has little or no influence on the process.

As you can probably guess, we have switched to Wireless Broadband. Our supplier owns (an interest in?) the ISP we ended up with but they don't talk to each other. In fact, to get a live person on the line at either location is a real pain in the you-know-what. On one occasion we were told that we were in the wrong department and transferred to another line where we had to spend another five minutes waiting. Then, when we finally got the new person, we were cut off right in the middle of the whole discussion.

Our original position was that once we get the kinks out of our system and we have properly educated ourselves to the “tricks of the trade” with them, all will be OK. As a matter of fact, things are improving. Customer “support” is pretty much “canned,” whether by phone or on the web. We note that none of the pre-recorded options even mention “Wireless Broadband.”

Of course, if it doesn't work out well, we will be writing about *another* solution to this on-going communications challenge, won't we?

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Over the years, a lot of work has gone into supporting the labor associated with putting on WESCON in those years it was held in the San Francisco area. I still hear my Dad, Jerry Jumper, talking about the sessions in the Cow Palace, and later on in Brooks Hall and the Civic Center and the committee work done by ERA members. These venues all pre-date Moscone center by many years.

Back in the early 70's, when Jack Logan was still active in the chapter leadership, the Chapter purchased an interest in WESCON. For many years following, the annual revenue received, as a result of our ownership share, supported much of the good work we accomplished in the Chapter.

For many reasons, the direction of ERA's involvement changed. The two ERA Chapters involved requested that a separation be effected. The Executive Committee held a meeting earlier this year, at Michaels At Shoreline. The primary purpose was to review and report on progress on that separation of ERA from membership in ECI, the management team of WESCON.

The first order of business was to review what had happened. Hugh Shyba (former ECI Board Member and Secretary) gave a quick synopsis of where we had been and where we were at that time. While two separate offers were made to ECI to purchase WESCON, neither offer was consummated. After some negotiation, ERA (both Northern and Southern California Chapters), accepted an agreement prepared by IEEE in 1974. Once the 1974 Agreement was mutually accepted, ERA was officially separated.

Dick Foley (former Board Member, ECI) then took over the presentation. He pointed out that the sum of monies could be from approximately \$800,000 to as high as \$1,000,000. The actual sum was slightly over the higher figure.

Of prime importance to ExComm was the depositing of that money in a safe place so as not to endanger our non-profit status, nor incur any immediate tax liability. An informal committee was formed and many discussions were held with the Southern California Chapter. Data



**Chris Jumper,
President**

ERA accepted an agreement prepared by IEEE in 1974. Once the – agreement was mutually accepted, ERA was officially separated.

were gathered and four proposals were made to the ExComm for a vote at this meeting. The proposals were:

1. That the Chapter establish an Educational Trust Fund in which the money could be safely deposited.
2. That the Chapter establish an Educational Trust Committee whose duties would be to carry out the by-laws of the Educational Trust.
3. That the model Trust Agreement and associated by-laws prepared for the Southern California Chapter by appropriate counsel be used by the Northern California Chapter.
4. That the Northern California Chapter utilize these by-laws.

The committee tentatively selected the initial Members of the Board of the trust, providing for terms of office of four (4) years duration. Terms would stagger each year so that a new Board Member will be added each year. Initial appointments and their pre-arranged terms of office, commencing January 1, 2001, is as follows:

Hugo Shane, 4 years.
Steve Ross 3 years

Bill Walsh 2 years
Dick Foley 1 year.

Each year the President of the Chapter will appoint a new member, usually in September. The new member's four-year term will coincide with the calendar years.

The Board will meet each year and will distribute any surplus funds for the Chapter's educational programs following the annual meeting.

The principal efforts of the initial Board will be to review the acceptability of the bylaws and select a suitable Trust Fund manager, a professional organization that will manage our investments.

All four of the above listed proposals and related procedures were discussed at length, moved, seconded and approved by voting members present.

All in all, this action sets in motion a lot of ideas. We can further expand our educational programs and increase the desirability of belonging to the organization.

We look forward to enhancing the membership of our Chapter and must thank both Dick Foley and Hugh Shyba for their dedicated involvement during these negotiations with ECI and IEEE.



ERA's 2001 National Management & Marketing Conference

Hyatt Regency Hotel • Monterey, California

April 21 - 25 for Reps • April 22 - 25 for Manufacturers

NEWS AND VIEWS

Kevin Frost, CPMR, with the help of Lon Hudson, CPMR, gave us the word on the CPMR (Certified Professional Manufacturer's Representative) program. What is it? How long does it take? What does it cost? And, what are the benefits of wearing the designator.

MRERF, (Manufacturers Representatives Educational Research Foundation) through its educational subsidiary, the institute for Educational Advancement, has put together an excellent program, designed for owners and senior management of rep firms. Young reps, just starting, would be wise to start preparing for that day when they are eligible to participate.

Interested parties should browse the web site, www.mrerf.org for more details. There, you will find references to their goal of helping you increase your internal and external efficiencies -- improve your effectiveness -- and increase the likelihood that your efforts will give you the longevity in your business that you hoped and planned for.

The questions afterward were lively and reflected a lot of the interest members had in the program. We are not certain that enough is said about this fine, very specific training. How much we wish that such a program existed when we were trying to learn what it took to exist, grow and thrive in the rep business. It would have certainly eliminated a lot of "hard knocks."

It takes three years to complete this training. There are two locations, Arizona State and Indiana University. Which one you chose will be depending upon a lot of factors but more of our people have attended Arizona State. The next courses are August 12th thru 16th, 2001 at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN and January 13th thru 17th, 2002 at Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. We have applications in the Chapter Office and can e-mail them to you. You can also get them off the MRERF web site.



R.W. (Bob) Parsons
Editor

You will see the CPMR designator attached to more and more rep's business cards, stationery, web sites, everywhere that might attract customers. And customers will learn to look for the designator. They will start associating CPMR with dependability and good service

Be reminded as well that your principals are your biggest customers. They buy your bill of goods on a daily basis. In time, they will see the value of dealing with your company because of your leadership. You will see the day when the CPMR will be as important to reps as is the CPA is to Accountants and the CLU to Life Insurance Professionals.

In the final analysis, even if you chose to hide your CPMR training and never tell a soul – you can't ignore the value of the training! You couldn't complete three years of training and not profit from it.

Finally, it was a good meeting. If you missed it, that's your loss. We try to make all the meetings wildly successful. Some, like this one, are better than others.

Our next meeting should be exciting. We will hear about the circumstances leading up to the separation of ERA from any fiduciary relationship with ECI, the folks who run WESCON. The deed is done and we will get a report.

Of more importance is what happens in the future. Donna Call, COO, and Sue Kingston will join us at the meeting to discuss how they would like to involve the chapter in future WESCON shows, specifically 2001 in San Jose. In all likelihood, our fearless leaders will have something to say about that, particularly as to compensation.

We will be visiting the up-coming ERA Conference in Monterrey, April 21-25, with trusty pen and camera in hand. We will likely put out a special issue of ERA News to cover the event. For those of you not as yet signed up, do so right away! Yes, you may have a bit of a challenge getting a room at the inn at this late date, but there is always the manger. Will there be a shining star overhead? Come on.

You will see the day when the CPMR will be as important to reps as is the CPA is to Accountants and the CLU to Life Insurance Professionals.

The Northern California Chapter of ERA is one of the most active chapters within the national association and it has won numerous awards for its service to the electronics industry. The chapter's success is a direct result of the interest and the effort put forth by its members and the volunteers and officers listed below.

2001 - Chapter Officers, Chairpersons & Directors

Executive Committee

Officers			Area	Telephone	Fax
President	Chris Jumper	JEM Electronics	(925)	417-1033	417-1458
Senior Vice President	Brian Everhart	Everhart, Inc.	(408)	865-0344	865-0343
Treasurer	Bill Hegepeth	Z-Tech Sales.	(408)	257-5371	257-5651
Secretary	Chris Straub	Straub Associates.	(650)	969-6060	964-6526
Membership VP	Tom Birks	Left Coast Ventures.	(408)	378-5620	378-8347

Division Vice Presidents:

Components/Materials; Assembly; Production	John Raimondo	Paxcell Group, Inc.	(775)	831-1333	831-1367
Communications/Computer Products	Eric Robinson	E. S. West	(408)	565-9050	565-9055
Instrumentation/Sensors	Brian Levien	Sentech Measurements	(530)	792- 0175	792-0515
RF/Microwave	Tom Birks	Left Coast Ventures, Inc.	(408)	378-5620	378-8347
Sound, A/V, Security	Phil Kipnis	Pacific Coast Visions.com	(408)	988-1444	988-1707

Executive Committee (The following plus officers noted above)

Board of Directors:

Chairman of the Board	Bill Walsh	Westech Associates	(650)	961-1422	968-9898
Past President	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing Assocs	(408)	988-8111	492-0197
Past President	Kevin Frost	Ross Marketing Assocs.	(408)	988-8111	492-0197
National Director	Jack Heidmiller	The Heidmiller Group	(650)	960-3933	390-0650
Alternate Director	Craig Smith	Prism Technical Sales	(408)	248-0700	248-2797

Committee Chairpersons

Ambassador					
Ambassador	Tom Mollard	Life Member	(650)	968-1581	
Archivist	Jean Lape	J.E. Lape Company	(650)	345-3021	345-3952
Directory	Steve Ross	Ross Marketing Ass.	(408)	988-8111	492-0197
Education	Michael Onken	Bridge Marketing	(650)	827-3600	827-3609
Golf Tournament	Ron Jenkins	Westech Sales	(650)	961-1422	968-9898
Internet	Edward Blake	Edward Blake Assoc. Inc.	(408)	934-3955	956-9732
Newsletter	Bob Parsons	Chapter Office Manager	(408)	243-3372	246-4413

National officers

Chairman of the Board	Clark Moulthrop	Moulthrop Sales, Inc.	(510)	461-7100	461-7120
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Chapter Subsidiary

Pres., Services, Inc.	Bill Walsh	Westech Associates	(650)	961-1422	968-9898
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Chapter staff

Executive Director	Hugo Shane		(408)	243-3372	246-4413
Bus. Office Mgr.	Bob Parsons		(408)	243-3372	246-4413