



NCALERA NEWS

MAY-JUNE

2003

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Bill Hedgpeth

We are losing too many good members to this economy so the ExComm is diligently working on adding benefits for the members, to try and bring greater interest back into the Chapter. We are trying to do a better job offering discounts to items, businesses and services that are useful to each one of us. We foresee discounts at hotels in the Bay Area, discounts at restaurants and even on supplies that we use continually. We will keep you posted.



One of the newest policy changes we have been discussing is the one you just received notice on, partial funding for Certified Professional Manufacturers Representative (CPMR) training. This is a program that has been under utilized for some time.

The next program is January 11-15 and will be held on the Arizona State University Campus in Tempe Arizona. Your Northern California Chapter will pay \$1200.00 of the expenses for tuition. This is a week long, Saturday-through-Wednesday activity, held every year for 3 years. It is a unique educational opportunity enabling you to enhance and demonstrate your professionalism as a Rep. Consider it.

We sponsor as many as 3 candidates a year. More about the program is detailed on the Manufacturers Representatives Educational Research Foundation website, www.mrerf.org, including the requirements to qualify. Applications must be submitted to EXCOMM by the end of July.

Raise your standards and consider enrolling.

See you all at the June 3rd meeting.

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NCALERA NEWS

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 R.W. (Bob) Parsons, editor

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MEEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

June 3 – Michaels at Shoreline, Regular meeting.
 August 3 – Michaels at Shoreline, Regular meeting.
 August 12-14 – WESCON 2003, Moscone Center.
 September 10-14 – Keystone 2003, A Forum for Professional reps.



**Mark Conley,
 National Director**

Once again we call your attention to the up-coming . . .

KEYSTONE 2003

A Forum for Professional Manufacturers' Representatives.

This meeting will be held September 10-14 at the Saddlebrook Resort, near Tampa, FL. This is the latest in a series of joint ERA-MANA events, adding NEMRA to the list of organizations providing input. You'll hear from reps and management from both organizations. The theme, "Building the Bridge to the Future," reflects the focus; dealing with the exodus of manufacturing from the U.S.; adopting new ways to earn income; selling principals on alternative compensation programs; and creating new performance criteria for reps, their employees and their principals.

Editor's Note: We stressed in our last issue the opportunity for reps to participate for the first time in such a "joint" meeting and the value of it all.

Having just returned from a similar meeting in Baltimore, we can attest to the value of such a get-together.

NEWS & VIEWS

Bob Parsons

We had a lot of fun handling responses from the troops around our April 1 meeting date. Few missed the opportunity to rag us a bit. It was all good clean fun, however and the meeting came off very well. Attendance set a record, even greater than the great showing for Bryan Shirley in February. And there wasn't a "fool" in the bunch.

☀ We were pleased to welcome Marguerite Wilbur, President and CEO of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network. She came fully prepared with an outstanding Power Point presentation covering all the high points of her talk.

The tone of the presentation was rather terse, leaving us not completely prepared for what came forth. The Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network exists, however, in order to track what is going on. And what is going on is not all that great for our customers.

Overall, there was some good news and some not-so-good. The "not-so-good" news was that the number of jobs in Silicon Valley declined; average annual pay declined; and venture capital investments in Silicon Valley companies declined. Further, software is now King as manufacturing (hardware) has declined.

Fortunately, the good news is that business-related services and biomedical product development have both advanced. Lease rates for office building space declined to new lows, and we have observed that several reps have moved into newer, bigger, better space, all at a reduced cost! In fact, using 1998 as a measuring point, things are just about completely back to that level.

Please note that we didn't say "normal." What we are thinking is that there are several other factors mentioned that add to this writer's belief that things are going to get better. Will we ever reach Y2K levels again? Probably not.

☀ One should expect to see rising profits among reps. Reps are true "glass-half-full" people, at least those who stick it out in the business. We had picked up several



Marguerite Wilbur

new members during the course of the past year or so. Now, some have left us due to bad business. Others have gone out of business. We will lose about ten, taking us down to roughly 75 paid members, at least three of which will be Northern California Chapter-only members.

On the other hand, our programs have been very well accepted in 2003 and the ExComm is striving to improve our other Chapter benefits. It is a lonely world out there without the networking and yes, the fellowship that membership brings to many. We'll keep working toward reclaiming some of those who have gone away.

☀ A couple of local reps demonstrated a trend in the way larger reps think, particularly those with commodity lines. Luscombe Engineering merged with another firm of almost equal size and became Fusion Technical Sales. Kottmeier Associates Inc., made a similar move and became Meritage Sales. While the member-count didn't change, in both cases, they brought in rep companies that had not been prior members of ERA. (We'll do interviews of these and at least one previously announced merger, in an effort to give you a better insight into what such a move entails – costs, troubles, communications – things that were not stressed in Bryan Shirley's presentation.)

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☀ There was talk of lots of activity around new lines being available during EDS. Meetings, interviews and conversations were many and varied. There were some very productive discussions causing excitement among the participants. People were looking for reps, sometimes for all the wrong reasons and often from all the wrong places. There are still some "turkeys" around.

☀ There are indications that principals are starting to actually hear their rep's pleas around tracking off-shore sales/shipments, particularly to China. Some of those principals who are now looking have lost long-established relationships with long-established rep firms. They have felt the loss of attention (spelled design-ins) in the U.S. That reduction of activity has visibly affected sales and shipments to their far-eastern customers. It has taken time but for some . . .

Fee-for-Service is no longer a dirty word. *Reps are getting deals* that are attractive enough so that everybody wins. Individual rep sales people are responding to “spiffs,” an old retail ploy (specific bonuses attached to selected products) with a fervor that is readily measurable. Principals are taking notice!

In fact, during the small rep forum held late last month, we heard indications that principals are now incorporating this feature into presentations to potential new reps.

TRAINING

Watch for new things in the training department. By the time you read this, local member companies will have received their initial notice of a new policy around supporting the CPMR Training program. This scholarship will be supporting at least two-thirds of the cost of the training with nothing expected from the candidates (or their member companies) beyond reasonable participation in the management of the chapter. You'll be hearing more about CPMR.

Michael Onkin, our Education Vice President, has several things working, not the least of which is a special presentation on ACT!, basics that even experienced users profit from hearing and tips on how to use ACT! to make more money! He is looking as well to other types of programs that can assist the rep in his search for new ways to make money.

**tips on how to use
ACT! to make
more money!**

DISCOUNT PROGRAM

One of the best ideas to come out of management this year was introduced during the last ExComm meeting. How can we give member companies better tools to use when selling their principals? Is there a way to improve our (ERA Rep's) relative reputation in the eyes of our principals that will reflect on the entire ERA membership? Yes!

You will be receiving a request, a survey that will attempt to identify all the hotels and motels in the area that are receptive enough to ERA rep's business that

they will give a discount to our visitors. We can and will prepare a dossier on each – where they are – convenient to Airport, Freeways? Airport pick-up? costs? special services? Everything the principal may need to make his or her visit effortless when it comes to lodgings.

So alert your office staff as to the up-coming survey. Share with us the names of key Motel/Hotel establishments where you consistently place or recommend to your visitors. We will then determine those who are interested in working with us.

The list can go on and on, of course -- restaurants; office supply firms; independent car rental agencies, to mention a few.

☀ There is no better reflection of professionalism than chapter activity. It is axiomatic that if you want to get something done, select a busy person to assign the task. Take a look at your officer’s listing at the end of the newsletter and you will see this kind of people, busy people who are willing to put in the time to help the chapter grow and prosper.

Most of these people “go through the chairs.” Year after year they put in their time, willingly and industriously. All are leaders in their companies and in the industry. The next time you see one of them out in the field or at an ERA function, take a minute to stop them and thank them for their efforts in your behalf.

The same thing applies to those who work for the National Association (in spades). Our National Director is one of about twenty reps who fill the bill for the national office. These people bear the additional burden of travel to National events, both time and money.

☀ Many folks had very special birthdays on May 26th this year. Not only did they receive the love and affection of all their family members and close friends, the Nation celebrated the day by having parades and flying flags all over the place. If you are wondering, this doesn’t happen every year. Memorial Day only comes this early every ump-teen years or so. Those born on that date really appreciated the extra attention – and the day off. ;-)



The Northern California Chapter of ERA is one of the more active chapters within the National Association. We have received numerous national awards to prove it. Our success is a direct result of the interest and effort put forth by its members and the officers listed below, all volunteers.

CHAPTER OFFICERS, CHAIRPERSONS & DIRECTORS

OFFICERS	NAME	COMPANY	A/C	PHONE	FAX
Chairman of Board	Chris Jumper	JEM Electronics	925	417-1033	417-1458
President	Bill Hedgpeth	Z-Tech Sales	408	257-5371	257-5651
Vice President	John Latimer	Luscombe Eng.	408	955-9515	955-9581
Treasurer	Bryan Levien	Sentech Measurements	530	792-0175	792-0515
Secretary	Phil Kipnis	Pacific Coast Ventures.com	408	988-1444	988-1707
Membership VP	Michael Onken	Bridge Mktg.	650	827-3600	827-3609
Special Interest Groups VP	Chris Straube	Straube Assoc. Inc.	650	969-6060	964-6526
Past President	Bill Walsh	Westech Assoc.	650	961-1422	968-9898
Past President	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing	408	988-8111	492-0197
National Director	Mark Conley	O'Donnell Assoc. No.	408	456-2950	943-8243
Alt.National Dir.	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing	408	988-8111	492-0197

DIVISION VICE PRESIDENTS

Communications	Hugh Shyba	Shur Sales	408	399-7487	399-4767
Components/Materials	Alan Kuczer	Prism Technical Sales	408	248-0700	248-2797
Computer Products	David Barrios	Dali Technical Sales	650	359-3982	359-3996
Instrumentation	Brian Levien	Sentech Measurements	530	792-0175	792-0515
RF/Microwave	Charlie Dickinson	C/G/ Associates	510	790-1193	790-1383
SAVE	Phil Kipnis	Pacific Coast Ventures.com	408	988-1444	988-1707

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Ambassador	Hugo Shane	Executive Director	408	243-3372	246-4413
Ambassador	Tom Mollard	Life Member	650	968-1581	
Education	Michael Onken	Bridge Marketing	650	827-3600	827-3609
Golf Tourney	Ron Jenkins	Westech Associates	650	961-1422	968-9898
Internet	Edward Blake	Edward Blake Assoc. Inc.	408	934-3955	956-9732
Scholarship	Brian Trankle	Jack Logan Memorial Fund	650	343-2416	
Distributor Coord.	Shirley Burres	Recht Associates	650	964-6321	964-8165
Nominating	Chris Jumper	JEM Electronics	925	417-1033	417-1458
Newsletter	Bob Parsons	Chapter Office Manager	408	243-3372	246-4413

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