



# NCALERA NEWS

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY**

**2006**

## NEWS & VIEWS

By R.W. (Bob) Parsons

Our meeting in February started out with the usual “changing of the guard.” Michael Onken thanked the members for their cooperation during his reign in 2005. He then introduced his replacement, Phil Kipnis, while handing over the official Chapter Gavel.



☀ Phil welcomed those present and promised to continue Michael’s duties with diligence. He introduced the topic that had been the center-piece of the ExComm meeting’s activity (held in the hour just preceding the regular Chapter meeting). They discussed and approved the idea to encourage local distributors to become Associate Members of the Chapter, taking a lead from the Southern California Chapter. A committee was set up to examine the details of putting the process into action.

The committee will consist initially of Mark Conley of O’Donnell Associates and John Latimer of Luscombe Associates North. Members with ideas will be welcomed into this group. They will be looking for people who are now working with distributors, such as Sherry Varela, O’Donnell’s distributor specialist. As their plan evolves, we will pass on the details. They may very well have a special event to entice the distributors to join us. No, not fun and games, but rather a relaxed, informal get-together where the committee leaders can give them a better idea of what mutual gains this plan will bring about.

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Obviously, the primary intent of their participation will be to encourage a sharing of requirements or needs of both groups that may not be adequately addressed at present. Keep your eyes on this activity. It could be a real winner.

☀ Mark Conley, our National Director, kicked off the meeting with his remarks about the changes that are taking place in their National organization. The Nominating Committee has completed their selection process and the new Executive Committee is in place. One of their first activities will be to completely overhaul the Dues process at National. The restructuring of this feature will be designed to eliminate some of the inequities that now exist and to set the Organization on a path to continued growth. No organization can exist without a predictable cash flow and that will be one of the objectives they seek.

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He added that we will be seeing more about a new trade division that has been created especially to fill the needs of the semiconductor rep. Special efforts are being invested to make certain that this new specialty group works for them.

Mark reported further on the apparent success put together by the officers of the National Conference. Over 125 registrants are on board, at a time when not a lot of expectations usually exist. Of significance, to date, 40% of those pre-registered are manufacturers and the majority of the remaining 60% are reps. This reflects a necessary lack of marketing activity by NEDA to date. They have been tied up in another show of

particular importance to their Association and will be stepping up their publicity efforts very quickly. This seems to fit in with the typical actions of distributors, who frequently put off signing up for such events until the last minute.

**FOR MORE CONFERENCE DETAILS, LOOK FOR AND CLICK ON THIS LOGO ON [WWW.ERA.ORG](http://WWW.ERA.ORG) WEBSITE**



What this could mean is that this Conference could have the highest attendance of recent years. Mark added that distributors are experiencing very similar challenges as are reps, dealing with splits and how to get their principals to cooperate with order tracking.

He went on to stress that not all manufacturers are the same. Many have put together operating procedures that work to achieve fair treatment for their reps and distributors with whom they work – when it comes to tracking splits that have been outsourced to foreign locations.

Not everybody understands the challenge and some reflect different attitudes. In order to help make their plans work, ERA is about to put out a Member-Wide survey – designed to facilitate guidance on how to work together.

Mark closed with comments about our Chapter's CPMR program. He reminded all present that individuals from member firms can be awarded a scholarship that provides full payment for the first and (the final) third sessions. We are reminded that it is time that we publish a complete summary of the process, what takes place at the training grounds, and what benefits do the graduates share? And we can list and show all our graduates.

*Editor's note: There are limits, so by all means, encourage your employees who show promise to enroll right away.*

☀ I was privileged to lead the final session and thanks to some kick-off responses from people like Mark Conley and Steve Ross, we had a genuinely active discussion going. Paul Winkler, of Apex Technical Sales, located in Templeton, was particularly welcome since this was the first meeting he had been able to attend since joining ERA. Several others spoke up, giving a finale to the entire event. In fact, we had to interrupt the conversations due to the late hour.

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First, some background. Just before the November meeting, a small group (six, altogether) were asked for "ideas" that they might share about how the Chapter could be improved. Their responses were excellent but, we were unable to incorporate these ideas into anything in writing before the February meeting,. During this time frame we were busy talking to various members of the ExComm, reviewing what had been suggested at previous meetings and trying to come up with fodder for this meeting.

That was when it was decided to send out the broad announcement regarding ideas from everyone. Regrettably, the only person left out of this complex circle of communications was the new president. Needless to say, he handled his shock with relative grace.

If you recall, the initial broad announcement asked:

- **Where do we go from here?**
- **What is good and what is bad?**
- **Most important, what is it that you want from the Chapter?**

Response was excellent. Here are some excerpts:

About *distribution*, for instance, certainly a way to go:  
 → ERA needs an active Distribution Coordinator. This person should be responsible for representing distribution in our planning sessions and all meetings. They could be given the responsibility to solicit input from Distribution management on numerous pertinent subjects.  
 → Maybe look at a different format for the meetings. Networking meetings with the distributors?

**Networking meetings with the distributors?**

And regarding *Membership*, good and bad:  
 → I believe a Membership committee could be useful to the chapter. Such a group should reach out to representatives in our market area who are not currently members of our chapter, this in an effort to bring in that "New Blood" that Mike Onken spoke about. If we truly want new blood, then we need to become far more welcoming. Does it take a committee? If so, then form such a committee.  
 → What does ERA Membership offer a firm to justify the money and time?

There were comments about the availability of *younger people*:  
 → We don't have enough people to really become officers and staff committees, especially considering we start over every year. To that end, I think it's high time that we extend all terms to be two years.

**. . . it's high time that we extend all terms to be two years.**

And, we even had comments on *fun and games*:  
 → We also need more fun programs. Some could be social in nature, i.e., a dinner cruise, wine tasting, dinner dancing. Shoot for a minimum of two social functions a year, not including the golf tournament. Spouses and office-mates should be encouraged to participate.

All of these quotes pertain to the last question, "what do you want from the Chapter?" Whatever happens, this should be an exciting year.

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

By Phil Kipnis

Wow! It's already 2006! No wonder Michael was so eager to pass the gavel. For those of you who missed the February meeting, we missed you too.

Over the next 12 months we have an exciting list of events and programs for you. As an example, we're going to reinstitute some of the Computer Magic classes. Other ideas we're working on involve re-visiting table top shows. We want to host qualified experts to speak at major distributors and customers.

I also want to reiterate my challenge to all of us "crusty" owners to bring a young(er) junior salesperson to each of the dinners and programs. We need to groom our successors if our profession is to carry forward into the next what ever the heck we face. Seriously, ERA provides the best setting to teach and season our staff to work together. I would remind all of us that we are not the competition, China Inc. is, the internet is, the bean counters at our principal are, but our fellow reps are truly our brothers in arms.

I hope all of you block out the calendar for our next dinner. (April 4<sup>th</sup>) It should be something really special.



**PHOTO GALLERY**

Just a few reminders that the meeting actually took place and that people were there, actively engaging in the kind of networking-interplay that makes these meetings worth while. Here's John Sessoms, Hugo Shane, Phil Kipnis (foreground); Dave Johnson, Eric Johnson and David McWalters at the read. On the right is Mark Conley, Larry Loeswick, Michael Onken, big Kevin Frost (?) and Bill Walsh – all deep in conversation(s).



***CHAPTER OFFICERS, CHAIRPERSONS & DIRECTORS\****

<i>OFFICERS</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>COMPANY</i>	<i>A/C</i>	<i>PHONE</i>	<i>FAX</i>
*Chairman of the Board	Michael Onken	Bridge Marketing	650	827-3600	927-3609
*President	Phil Kipnis	Pacific Coast Visions.com	408	988-1444	988-1707
Senior Vice President	Brad Bowman	Electro-Sales Associates	408	294-6299	549-9979
Secretary	open				
Treasurer	Mark Holcomb	O'Donnell Assoc., North	408	456-2950	943-8243
Membership V.P.	Ted Tilton	Gado Instrument Sales	408	736-8191	739-9826
Support	Chris Straube	Straube Assoc.	650	969-6060	964-6526
Education V.P.	Larry Loeswick	LS Engineering	650	464-7841	967-5884
Support	Brent Hedgpeth	Z-Tech Sales	408	257-5371	257-5651
Special Interest Groups	Chris Straube	Straube Assoc.	650	969-6060	964-6526
*Past President	John Latimer	Luscombe Engineering	408	955-9516	955-9581
*Past President	Bill Hedgpeth	Z-Tech Sales	408	257-5371	257-5651
National Director	Mark Conley	O'Donnell Assoc., North	408	456-2950	943-8243
Alt. National Dir.	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing	408	988-8111	492-0197

***DIVISION LEADERS***

Communications	Hugh Shyba	Shur Sales	408	399-7487	399-4767
Component/Materials	Bill Walsh	Westech Associates	650	961-1422	968-9898
Computer Products	Brent Hedgpeth	Z-Tech Sales	408	257-5371	257-5651
Instrumentation	Ted Tilton	Gado Instrument Sales	408	736-8191	739-9826
RF/Microwave	Chas. Dickenson	C/G Associates	510	790-1193	739-9826
ESI (formerly SAVES)	Chuck Gorley	C&V Rep inc.	408	727-6105	727-1375

***COMMITTEE CHAIRS***

Ambassador	Hugo Shane	Past Exec. Director	650	593-8964	
Ambassador	Tom Mollard	Life Member	650	968-1581	
Golf Tourney Chair	Ron Jenkins	Westech Associates	650	961-1422	968-9898
Internet	Ed Blake	Edward Blake Associates	408	934-3955	956-9732

***INVESTMENT TRUST***

Chair	Bill Hedgpeth	Z-Tech Sales	408	257-5371	257-5651
Trustee	John Latimer	Luscombe Engineering	408	955-9516	955-9581
Trustee	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing	408	988-8111	492-0197
Trustee	Ron Jenkins	Westech Associates	408	961-1422	968-9898

***CHAPTER STAFF***

Executive Secretary	Bob Parsons	Life Member	408	243-3372	246-4413
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- The Board of Directors shall consist of the current and most recent three (3) former Chapter Presidents.