
THE Interface

NEWSLETTER OF THE
HUMAN FACTORS &
ERGONOMICS SOCIETY
SOUTH JERSEY
CHAPTER

SEPTEMBER 2003

Promoting Human Factors

Science Fair Winner, Elections, Picnic, and the Love of Design



The Chapter Did a Good Thing!

By Mike McAnulty

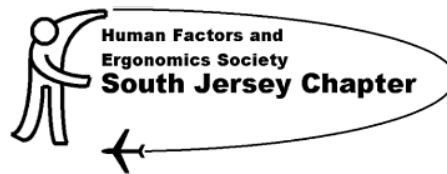
Last spring, the Chapter sponsored prizes (Borders gift certificates) for the winners in the Behavioral and Social Sciences category at the Jersey Shore Science Fair, held at Stockton College. Five of our members served as judges. We also invited the winners to present their projects at a Chapter meeting and take a tour of the Technical Center. The winner in the Junior Division, Becky Ojserkis (the only local area winner), came to our July Chapter meeting and gave a great presentation to a full RDHFL Briefing Room, then fielded questions like a pro. I don't know about all of you, but I can't imagine standing in front of a group of strange adults when I was 13 and being able to talk and answer questions. She was extremely impressive, and if someday she entered our field, I predict she would be a great asset.

I received thank you letters from both Becky and her mother, a clinical psychologist who accompanied Becky on her visit here. Becky's note thanked the Chapter first for the opportunity to come

and present her project, saying it was a great learning experience. Second, of course, she thanked us for the gift certificate and tour. Maybe I'm reading more into it than I should, but it seems significant to me that her first thought was about the chance to interact with us and learn something new rather than what she could buy. Especially for a 13-year old.

Her mother's letter further reinforced the value of this opportunity. She wrote, "It was a wonderful experience for Becky to present her work in front of a group of professionals." and "It is wonderful that your group supports the early interest in research in students today. I know that Becky has learned a great deal from this entire experience."

I encourage the members and future Executive Councils to continue support for the Science Fair and to include invitations to present projects at Chapter meetings. Those of us who attended the meeting thoroughly enjoyed her presentation, it was obviously a very positive experience for her, and just maybe our discipline may reap the benefits a few years from now.



<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hfessouthjersey/>

Nominations and Elections Update

By Tanya Yuditsky

Elections for the 2004 Executive Council are right around the corner. All members in good standing (those who paid dues for 2002 or 2003) will be receiving a nomination ballot shortly. Please read the instructions on the ballot carefully and send in your nominations by the specified due date. The positions that are up for election this year are:

- President Elect (will become Chapter President in 2005)
- Treasurer (1-year term)
- Secretary (1-year term)
- Publications Committee Chair (2-year term)
- Nominations and Elections Committee Chair (2-year term)

This is your opportunity to get involved in the Chapter Council! If you have any questions about the elections, please contact Tanya Yuditsky at (609) 485-5375 or Tanya.Yuditsky@faa.gov. If you would like to ensure that you are a "member in good standing" for 2003, please contact Pam Della Rocco at (609) 485-7376.

Program Events

By **Edmundo A. Sierra, Jr.**

This Saturday, September 20th, we will have our 2003 HFES SJ-Chapter picnic! Everyone is invited, so bring your family and friends! We have reserved Pavilion C at Estelle Manor Park. There will be volleyball, horseshoes, bocce ball, Frisbee and more! There will be food for everyone, but people are encouraged to bring snacks or desserts. The picnicking will begin at 10 in the morning and continue until three in the afternoon. In case the weather is foul, please call (609) 892-0732 to verify that the event is still taking place and to get the Rain Date.

The Chapter recently visited the new Security Optimization Human Factors Integration and Evaluation (SOHFIE) Laboratory. The tour began with a walk through a warehouse full of unclaimed baggage. It was amazing to see all of the bags and to wonder at what might be contained within. Mike Barrientos presented an organization overview and introduced part of the team. We were then shown some baggage screening systems and allowed to work some of them ourselves. We were able to gain an appreciation for the function that screeners perform and the complexity of the human component in the system. In another exciting part of the tour, we were shown personal screening systems. Members were also able to experience some of these future systems. They tickled. I think everyone there would agree that it was a great experience. A big thanks goes out to Michael Snyder and Mike Barrientos and their colleagues for making this visit possible.

Later that week, the Chapter also went out to the ballgame to see the Surfs beat the Sharks. Unfortunately, that didn't happen - but everyone enjoyed each other's company in this relaxed setting. We hope to have more of

these outings as a group.

Upcoming events:

- SEPTEMBER – Chapter Picnic
- OCTOBER – Presentation by Gulshan Panjwani
- DECEMBER - Panel Discussion: Statistics in Applied Research

Membership Report

By **Pam Della Rocco**

The membership committee is pleased to report that we have 43 members for 2003. With his presentation at the last Chapter event, Mike Barrientos earned a free membership. We would like to welcome new members Mark Hale and Bob Muldoon.

Treasurer's Report

By **Jerry Hadley**

As of the last Executive Council meeting on September 11, 2003, there was \$333.69 in checking and \$768.45 in savings.

“I Love It.” Is it the Future of Interface Design?

By **Gulshan Panjwani**

Obsession with cars, I am told, is a natural phenomenon. So, I have been one fascinated kid most of my life. The automobile industry has had an amazing history, more like a wave shuttling between innovations of different kinds. Just to give you a brief history, the early 1900's saw the mass production of automobiles, with the design concentrating on making it easy to manufacture,

while from the 1930's the focus shifted to making them modern.



1918 – 1927 Chevrolet



1930 Chevrolet

The 60's saw a wave of innovation to make cars customizable and unique. With the 70's the design concentrated on utility and use, with trucks and vans becoming more common than ever. Now that the technological advances have simmered down and the automobile as a technology is taken for granted, we see a frenzy of concept-cars overstocked with “aesthetic futurism.”



2001 Mercedes Maybach

Although this could make a good history chapter I believe that there is more to it than just history. It might give us insight (see **Design**, page 3)

Design

(Continued from page 2)

into the way design sways with time (or more like with the need of the times). I agree with Dr. Atwood's claim in his lecture that he presented to the chapter that design is design, regardless of the application.

Let us consider the design of software. The software design process has gone through similar phases. The early software was clunky to use and the goal was to make them faster. The late 70's saw the advent of the modern easy-to-use software. By the late 80's and early 90's usability played an important role. The mid to late 90's saw a lot of customization upgrades of software, which till date seems to be the focus. Thus, the eventual goal is to make it usable.

Donald Norman has been a prominent and prolific writer in the Human Computer Interaction (HCI) domain. He has written many books in the area and his views on the same have changed or matured as he calls it. The first of the Norman's essays in this body of writing was the *Design of Everyday Things (DOET)*, which was a precursor to a number of writings and books in that area. In the book, Norman emphasizes the importance of usability of everyday use things that could change the perception about a product or a task. Norman argues that similar to the psychology of how people interact with things, there is a psychology of material (affordances), which the designers need to assess and design for. In the following years, Norman wrote more about the social impact of the organization on the design process. His point was that there are three legs to a human-centered process: technology, marketing, & user experience. These are in line with the automobile industries push for mass manufacturing and customization and utility.

In his forthcoming book called *Emotion & Design*, Norman recommends that the

aesthetics and looks of the product are as important as the technical design of the product. In his article, "Attractive things work better," he provides a scientific basis for such an effect. He claims a theory exists of positive affect and negative affect that affects performance on a task. He claims that a positive affect is similar to a "wide" task and the negative affect is similar to the "deep" task as he explained in his book, *DOET*. This seems like an attempt to relate his newfound interest to something he proposed once. Although he claims that he had never discounted the emotion as a factor in the use of things, it is not apparent in his earlier readings that he cared for those.

The social impact of a product is one of the key factors that decide the success of the product, claim Brown & Duguid in their book, "The Social Life of Information." I believe that their claim will be reflected in Norman's forthcoming articles. For technology to mature, it needs to be invisible as he claims, but it also needs to be socially adaptable and invoke social emotions that are conducive for its use.

This makes me wonder if emotions can be accounted for and will help in the design of interfaces. I think we should try it out by replacing the blips that represent aircraft on the scope with smiley faces and crying ones to indicate the ones in conflict. It sure is worth a try.

References

- Norman, D. A. (1988). *Design of Everyday Things*.
- Norman, D. A. (1996). In T. Winograd (Ed.), *Bringing Design to Software*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Norman, D. A. (1998). *The Invisible Computer*. Cambridge MA, MIT Press
- Norman, D. A. (2002). *Emotion and design: Attractive things work better*. *Interactions Magazine*, ix (4), 36-42.

Brown & Duguid (1992). *Social Life of Information*. Harvard Business School Press.

Highlights of Recent Executive Council Meetings

By Gulshan Panjwani

August 14: Mike McAnulty, Edmundo Sierra, Jr., Tanya Yuditsky, Kenneth Allendoerfer, Jerry Hadley, and Todd Truitt were present.

The Executive Council (EC) discussed the upcoming Chapter event at the Surf's game. Eddie will send out a reminder to all members that the game will be on August 22 at 6:30 p.m. He will also send out another reminder/invitation for the Chapter picnic to be held on September 20, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Estelle Manor at the Atlantic County Park, Pavilion C. The Chapter will buy hamburgers and hotdogs for grilling along with drinks. Chapter members will be asked to bring other items at their discretion.

Jerry reported that the Chapter funds were in order with \$374.13 in checking and \$768.45 in savings.

The EC agreed that we would distribute the next issue of the *Interface* in September prior to the picnic. Todd will compile the newsletter and provide it to EC members for review in mid-September.

Tanya took the initial steps to get the upcoming election process underway. Kenneth and Todd both volunteered to serve on the elections committee.

September 11: The members present for the meeting included Mike McAnulty, Todd Truitt, Kenneth Allendoerfer, Jerry (see *Minutes*, page 4)

Minutes

(Continued from page 3)

Hadley, Edmundo Sierra Jr. and Gulshan Panjwani.

Mike received a note from Becky Ojserk- is thanking the chapter for giving her a chance to present her project. The committee agreed that participating in the science fair and then inviting the winner over was a good project to continue in the future.

The EC discussed the response to the Surf's game. The event did not draw many Chapter members this year or last year and we decided that this event should not be pursued next year.

The big thing at hand was the Chapter picnic on Saturday, September 20. So far about 25 people have sent an RSVP saying they will attend. More people are encouraged to come since it will be a fun event. Eddie will send another invitation to the Chapter members in the next couple of days.

The EC discussed two potential events for the month of October. A lunch movie for the week of the 20th was tentatively scheduled. A potential lunchtime presentation by a Chapter member in the 2nd week of October is also in the works. The final notice will be sent out later in the month.

2003 Executive Council

President

Mike McNulty

President-Elect

Kenneth Allendoerfer

Secretary

Gulshan Panjwani

Treasurer

Jerry Hadley

Nominations & Elections Chair

Tanya Yuditsky

Publications Chair

Todd Truitt

Program Chair

Edmundo A. Sierra, Jr.

Membership Chair

Pam Della Rocco

South Jersey HFES Chapter Membership and Renewal Application

For the Year 2003

Applicant Name: _____

New Member *(complete all fields)*

Renewal *(complete this section only)*

I am (a Fellow / a Full Member / an Associate Member / Not a Member) of the National HFES *(circle one)*

Organization/Company: _____

Mailing address: _____

Daytime phone: () - -

Evening phone: () - -

Fax number: () - -

E-mail address: _____

Endorsing SJC-HFES Member: _____

SJC HFES dues for 2003 are \$10. Make checks payable to the "Human Factors Society." Submit applications and checks to:

Pam Della Rocco
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