
THE Interface

NEWSLETTER OF THE
HUMAN FACTORS &
ERGONOMICS SOCIETY
SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER

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2004 Premiere Issue

New Executive Council in motion, upcoming events announced, annual membership drive



President's Column: Be Easy on the New Guy

By **Kenneth Allendoerfer**

This is my first column as President of the HFES South Jersey Chapter, so please bear with me as I learn the ropes. I promise that my signal-to-noise ratio will improve!

First, thank you to our 2003 Executive Council. The chapter had one of its best years ever in terms of the variety and quality of activities and the amount of participation and satisfaction of our members. This year's council faces the problem of achieving even more than 2003—frankly, that's a nice problem to have. Special thank you to our outgoing council members: Mike McAnulty, Gulshan Panjwani, Jerry

Hadley, and Todd Truitt.

Second, let me discuss two directions I'd like to move the chapter during my tenure. The first direction is **community outreach**. Last year, we scored a great success by serving as judges for the South Jersey Science Fair and, for the first time, sponsoring three prizes in the Behavioral and Social Sciences category. In my opinion, we scored an even greater success when the 13-year-old winner of the junior division presented her excellent poster to our chapter. To me, these activities really showed how committed our chapter is to the future of the human factors field. We greatly raised our visibility in the community and, I hope, encouraged kids who may one day take our places as human factors professionals. This year, I'd like to get our members into local schools and colleges to talk about our field, raise awareness, and encourage students. Someday in the future, there could be an HFES student chapter at Stockton or Rowan. In particular, I'd like the chapter to sponsor some sort of event for National Ergonomics Month in October. We'll keep you informed of possibilities for community outreach and I strongly encourage you to get involved. It's extremely rewarding for you and

the kids.

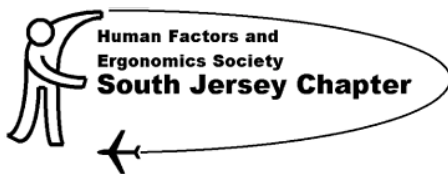
The second direction is hosting some sort of **mini-conference** in the next 18 months. This isn't a well-formed plan yet but I envision it as a one-day conference with panels, lectures, and posters centered on a human factors topic. I envision a keynote talk from one of the more prominent members of our field. I hope we can attract participation from people outside our chapter, maybe including students from local colleges and professionals from outside of South Jersey. The council is forming a sub-committee, chaired by Bonnie Kudrick, to organize the conference. Any ideas or feedback about the conference is welcome or, better yet, volunteer to help.

Finally, I encourage everyone to become more involved with *your* chapter. The council does most of the planning for chapter activities but we can't do it all by ourselves. We have four standing committees: Program, Nominations & Elections, Membership, and Publications. If you're interested in helping in any of these areas, please contact the appropriate committee. They'll appreciate the help! On a less formal basis, we rely on you to promote the chapter to your friends and col-

leagues. Invite someone to attend one of our activities. Send someone to our website:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hfes_southjersey/ upload something, or add a great HF link. Finally, the executive council absolutely relies on you for ideas and feedback. Have something to say? Tell me or tell another council member. Do it often.

For those keeping track, my president's logo is PowerDroid. PowerDroid is a *Star Wars* action figure released by Kenner in 1979. The thing with PowerDroid is that he appears in the movie for about 3 seconds and plays absolutely no role in the storyline. He's really closer to being scenery than to being a character. Having already released all the major characters, and knowing that kids would pay for any piece of plastic with the words *Star Wars* printed on it, Kenner decided to release this incredibly lame, third-tier action figure. PowerDroid lives happily in a plastic box in my parents' basement with a few dozen other marginal characters like Walrusman, Bossk, and 4-LOM. Why he still haunts my thoughts, after 25 years, is anyone's guess.



Upcoming Events

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

Hi everyone. I am very excited to get started with 2004. Our Executive Council (EC) is full of fresh faces and a renewed enthusiasm. Lots of new ideas have been

brought forth at both the Program Committee and EC meetings. Meetings will include more valuable panel discussions, fascinating tours, and distinguished speakers. There are many special surprises coming up so keep an eye out for posters, emails, and announcements in this newsletter!

This month, Dario Salvucci will present his talk, "Predicting Driver Distraction with Cognitive Models". His presentation will be at our February 25th brownbag meeting (at noon) in the RDHFL conference room. We look forward to seeing you there!

Abstract

As drivers gain access to increasingly numerous and complex on-board devices for support (e.g., navigation) and "infotainment" (e.g., news and e-mail), many have raised concerns about the issue of driver distraction -- excessive attention to secondary devices rather than the primary driving task. In this presentation I will discuss how we can better understand and alleviate driver distraction through cognitive modeling. We have developed a computational driver model in a cognitive architecture (ACT-R) that incorporates built-in, well-tested parameters and constraints for cognitive and perceptual-motor processes. By integrating the driver model with models of secondary-task behavior, we can generate a priori behavioral predictions about how secondary tasks affect driver performance. Such predictions can in turn be used to evaluate, compare, and rapidly develop new on-board devices.

About the Speaker

Dario Salvucci is an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. He received a B.S.E. from Princeton University in 1994 and a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University in 1999, both in Computer Science. His work spans various areas of human-computer interaction, computer science, and cognitive science, including automated analysis of human eye movements and computational models of driver behavior and distraction. He has also recently received an NSF CAREER Award, the Fred Burggraf Prize at the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, and the Siegel-Wolf Prize at the International Conference on Cognitive Modeling.

Annual Membership Drive

By **Pam Della Rocco**

It's that time again. ..time to renew your membership in the South Jersey Chapter of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES). It is still just \$10 per year.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in human factors. You do not need to be a member of the national HFES to join. The benefits include a newsletter, hearing guest speakers, touring facilities with human factors programs or issues, sharing information and networking with colleagues, video presentations...and, of course, the good company. The program committee is already working on an interesting set of activities for this year.

If you've never joined or are new to the area, please join us. To join or renew your dues for 2004, please complete the form in this newsletter and/or contact Pam Della Rocco, Membership Chair.

Publications Committee

By Shantanu Pai

I want to thank our 2003 Publications Committee chair Dr. Todd Truitt along with members of the Publications Committee Dr. Sehchang Hah and Mr. Robert "Bob" Muldoon. As the Publications Chair, I would like to welcome members who would like to serve on the Publications Committee. Also, all members are encouraged to submit short articles for publication in The Interface. Please keep membership interests and backgrounds in mind when submitting your contribution.

The Publications Committee welcomes books reviews, summaries of journal articles, editorials, etc.

Highlights of Recent Executive Council Meetings

By Bonnie Kudrick

February 10: Members present for the meeting included Kenneth Allendoerfer, Pam DellaRocco, Carolina Zingale, Shantanu Pai, Edmundo Sierra and Bonnie Kudrick. Kenneth opened the meeting. Last meetings minutes were approved.

Discussion regarding the upcoming Brown Bag lunch meeting ensued; the speaker will be Drexel's Dr. Dario Salvucci. His graduate students may also attend and they will receive a tour of the lab.

Edmundo Sierra mentioned that the chapter gives Borders' gift certificates to speakers and usually the treasurer picks them up.

Kenneth provided a list of speakers from FAA Research, Engineering, & Development Advisory Committee that will be coming to the Tech Center in the beginning of March. The Chapter will piggyback the speakers' visit to the FAA and ask them to extend their stay to March 4. If necessary, we will offer to reimburse the speaker for an additional night at the hotel. Kenneth suggested that we try to get Chris Wickens to speak to our chapter. Pam offered to contact him; Shantanu suggested Dr. Wickens discuss Free Flight. If Dr. Wickens is not available, Pam will call Dr. Sarah Dalton. Dr. Colin Drury will be the next choice if Dr. Dalton is not available.

Pam, the Membership Chair, reported that there are 21 paid members, so far this year. There is a total of 25 current memberships, due to people who gave presentations last year, their membership dues is waived for one year. Pam stated that last year there were 43 members.

Carolina, the Nominations Chair had no news to report given that there are no upcoming elections.

Edmundo, Program Committee Chair, created a listing of tentative Events for the upcoming year, which included:
February's speaker, Dr. Dario Sal-

vucci, who will speak on predicting driver Distraction with Cognitive Models. In March, we are hoping to have Dr. Chris Wickens, Dr. Sarah Dalton, or Dr. Colin Drury speak. The months of April and May are still open.

South Jersey HFES Chapter Membership and Renewal Application

For the Year 2004

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:

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