



Headquarters Highlights

Winter 2004

by *Russell V. Carstensen, Executive Director*

Lost Credit Card

Until recently, I had never been in a Hooters restaurant. I do enjoy dropping their name just to “spice” up the conversation, but that is just about it.

There is a Hooters located on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma Washington. One day, after business in Seattle, I was headed south on I-5 and realized that I had not had lunch. Usually, I would just push on home (about an hour drive) and eat there. This time I got to thinking, why not stop at Hooters and see what the fuss was all about.

Once inside, it seemed to me that Hooters is really a family restaurant. It has gotten some bad press because of its hiring practices and the uniforms it requires servers to wear, but the menu is basically comfort food and beer. There were moms and kids sitting at tables eating hamburgers and fries just like any other restaurant.

My story takes off from here. Having had a pleasant lunch I continued on my trip home. I stopped for gas on the way. The next day, I went to pay for a pair of shoes and discovered my debit card was gone! Apparently, it had fallen out of my wallet at the gas station as I refueled. At any rate, I cancelled the card immediately and waited for a new one.

When my statement came in, I discovered four unauthorized gas charges for gasoline between the time I filled up and when I cancelled the card. Gas machines take credit cards without identification or pin numbers. Whoever found my card had apparently treated all of his friends, presumably at my expense.

It got dicey hereafter. It seems that everyone in the banking business is female and females in general do not like Hooters. My trip to Hooters became a benchmark. I first

went to the teller (a female) to ask what to do about the unauthorized charges. She looked over my statement and, looking down her nose at me, asked “Is it the *HOOTERS* charge that’s incorrect? I had to confess that it was mine.

She then referred me to a fraud counselor (female) to start the paperwork to get the charges removed. Again, down the nose with the question “So the *HOOTERS* charge is the problem? Again I pointed out that the unauthorized charges happened after the gasoline charge.

Then a telephone call was necessary for the fraud counselor to resolve a question on the forms. She explained to the other party (presumably female) “The problems begin when he made a trip to *HOOTERS*.”.....

Eventually, I completed the correct forms and was able to make good my escape. If I ever go to Hooters again, you can believe I will only deal in cash.

An Apology

Dick Ford is our most recent addition to the Board of Directors. Dick and I have a history that spans at least two decades. We have done some innovative things together.

At this point I owe Dick Ford an apology for my taking liberties with his picture. Dick has been the photographer for the IEEE EMC Society for a number of years. He does excellent work and he pays attention to the ethics of those whose image he captures and whose pictures he borrows. I, on the other hand, am an amateur. I tend to grab what I need and use it as necessary to solve the problem of the moment.

For the last issue of *NARTE News*, I was running behind. It was just one of those issues that I could not get to

come together for me. On top of that it was the first all electronic issue. I wanted it to be a step above what we could do in print media.

At one point we decided to publish pictures of the Board members along with their positions and terms. We had file photos of everyone but Dick. Dick and I both had medical problems this summer. His resulted in bypass surgery, the results of which are reflected in his picture. I discovered that if we closely cropped the picture, we could have a “head shot” of Dick. Problem solved. I then went on about the other tasks of getting the *News* out.

To those who do not know Dick, the picture is a good photograph. To those who do know him, he does not look real great, although it does resemble him. To Dick, the image reflected a representation of a near death experience. Not his finest hour by any stretch. Naturally, he was embarrassed by the image and disappointed that I would take such liberty. He has loads of better photos that he would have made available, had I only asked.

I came very close to losing a dear friend over my cavalier approach. For this I must apologize publicly to Dick and to you the reader. I have learned my lesson. You can see a much better picture of Dick on the Board page. He has fully recovered from his surgery and is contributing to the *NARTE* mission.

Consultants' References

A question was raised by several consultants about supervisory references for their applications. Consultants do not have supervisors, they have clients. Consultants seem to be reluctant to ask their clients to fill out a reference form just because it also

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may expose a vulnerability, and what consultant wants to tell his client that there are things he does not know?

Here's the thing. NARTE wants expressions of confidence in your abilities from people who know your work. Most people or organizations hire consultants because they do not have the desired capability or resources in house. If they do not have a solid capability, we are not real crazy about hearing from your clients either.

A consultant should simply notify the certification committee (by annotating their application) that they do not have a supervisor and indicate their relationship to the people from whom they have asked to act as references. The certification committee can then make a judgement on the responses provided. Do not be reluctant to apply for certification just because you do not have a supervisor. It has to be significant that you do not have to be closely monitored in the performance of your job.

Product Safety Grandfathering

NARTE initiated a certification in Product Safety Engineering during August of 2003. The period for current practitioners to qualify by eminence (thus avoiding the examination) closes August 31, 2004. It is very important to have one's application postmarked by that date. All applications postmarked after August 31, 2004 will have to take and pass the Product Safety Examination. (See Russ Carstensen's article, p.6).

EMC Open Book Examination Strategy

It has been asked if there is a core set of books from which the EMC examination is drawn. No, there is not. The examination covers (that is, holds you responsible for) 26 areas of technology.

Our examination question base comes from the 10 questions submitted by each applicant. While some of the questions are referenced to particular texts, not all are. Those questions are based on industry practices.

The examination is open book. You can bring any text material you think will help. That does not mean to bring every book you own! The best approach, in my opinion, is to bring a few books with which you have solid familiarity.

For example, it is extremely helpful to have a dictionary of electrical and electronic terms. Quite often, gaining the rigorous meaning of a term used is all that is needed to get "unstuck" on how to solve a problem. The second thing I would bring is one or two general handbooks such as Standard Handbook for Electronic Engineers (published by McGraw-Hill) or Reference Data for Engineers: Radio, Electronics, Computer and Communications, published by SAM publishing. Another surprisingly useful text is the Radio Amateur's Handbook, published by ARRL.

I generally avoid the use of textbooks because textbook authors spend a lot of pages explaining single concepts in very careful detail. When sitting for an exami-

nation, the candidate wants to find the concept or formula rapidly, solve the problem at hand, and move on.

Thoughts On Military Standards

Military Standards (MIL-STDs) generally impose requirements and are what-to-do documents. Military Handbooks (MIL-HDBKs) are generally how-to-do-it documents.

In general, referring to military standards by number, with the revision letter omitted, implies the most current version of the standard. If an examination question or a requirement refers to a specific military standard, the reference must also include the revision letter of that standard to be valid.

Military Standards are imposed by contract on suppliers. An equipment or system developed under a specific military standard remains under those requirements for its service life. To upgrade the version of a standard initially imposed would be prohibitively expensive and just is not usually done. That is why knowledge of older standards is considered important. However, with the passage of time it becomes more difficult to obtain copies of older standards (individual project offices keep them as related to their systems but they do not deal with the public). NARTE has elected to drop examination questions referring to older standards and is currently reviewing its examination base to eliminate such questions.

NARTE has captured the US Government issued military standards on the EMC Study Guide disk. If individuals want to find their own copies of specific documents, they are available from the DODSSP in paper format, FREE OF CHARGE. The quickest method for accessing these documents is to go to <http://dodssp.daps.mil> and use the Acquisition Streamlining & Standardization Information System (ASSIST) QuickSearch, or go to ASSIST-Online to obtain copies of any military standard.

Change To EMC Certificates

We have changed suppliers for the EMC certificate. In that change, the new supplier could not get the light blue background to work. He has instead, provided a light background made up of light blue NARTE logos. He retained the distinctive border along with the gold seal and lettering. The new version looks quite handsome.

A Fallen Warrior

NARTE Director Roger Hottmann passed away on Friday, February 13, at St. Mark's Hospital in Salt Lake City, due to complications from diabetes. Unknown to his family and friends, Roger's doctors told him he had 6 months left after he got out of the hospital in November. Roger wanted to just "move forward with life." We will miss Roger's dedicated service to his profession, his colleagues and his friends. ☹