



Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2006

You've heard the phrase "actions speak louder..." The *words* I've heard carry the refrain "building a network of inventive and creative people is important. Giving back to the community matters. We share a common vision of literally building a better world."

Last night, *action* was taken that shouted gleefully to prove that those words are profoundly heartfelt by generous people. The math is a bit fuzzy, but over 150 people volunteered their time to gather together and share their common interest.

A small fortune was spent. If you consider the cost of the wages for the 3 hours for all who attended, the expense was enormous. I was stunned to simply consider the cash outlay for the rental of the facility, gourmet meal, wine, and security guards. There was airfare and car rental. Add in the hours of preparation – phone calls, emails, printed flyers, website updates – this was a serious commitment of resources.

Nerves were frayed, schedules were disrupted. Not everything went exactly as planned. So, was it worth it? Let me describe a bit more about the events of the evening. Then you can decide for yourself.

The outdoor patio was a lovely setting on a warm autumn evening for a dinner. However, with seating for 150, the physical layout and acoustics were not ideal for technical presentations. We chose to split the meeting agenda to separate the laptop based speeches from the dinner party. The Bel Mar Center features a pair of meeting rooms that were perfect for the traditional aspect of the user group meeting.

Using the example set by Richard Doyle and the recent SWUGN Technical Summit, we set up each room with a separate agenda and allowed the attendees to choose the presentations that most interested them.

We had 5 speakers. The following are the introductions used in our promotion for the event:

John McEleney, Chief Executive Officer, SolidWorks Corporation. CSWP - started with SolidWorks in 1996. Extremely enthusiastic about user groups and is trying to visit as many of them as he can. John has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Rochester, a master's degree in manufacturing systems from Boston University, and a master's degree in business administration and marketing from Northeastern University.

Caleb Stoll - CSWP - Extensive experience in machining and sheet metal manufacturing. Expert in 3d modeling, design, and drafting. Caleb has a gift for showing how easy SolidWorks can be to use.

Joel Quizon - Vice President of MCAD Technologies. Master of SolidWorks at all levels from customer tech support, applications engineering, to hands-on design. Few people are better at making technical presentations than Joel!

Kevin Van Liere - President of 3Dawn Consulting. Certified SolidWorks Instructor. Expert in FEA, 3d modeling, and design. Kevin has taught SolidWorks courses at Front Range Community College. He is an excellent coach and mentor. If you haven't talked with him yet, try to make time to do so in the future!

Gerald Davis - President of the Colorado SolidWorks User Group. CSWP - started using SolidWorks in 1998. For a living, Gerald uses SolidWorks in his design and engineering practice. Primarily adept in sheet metal, Gerald is also a magazine columnist and public speaker. He'll be speaking at the FABTECH show in Atlanta in November and at SolidWorks World 2007 in New Orleans in February.



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We had a little over 70 people register to attend the technical meetings, so we set up the rooms with 30 chairs in one and 40 in the other. It was cozy theater style seating, but we expected to have a few no-shows. There were in fact very few no-shows.

As Master of Ceremonies, I had planned to gather the entire group in the lobby to explain what the seating options were and which subject would be presented when. To my surprise and delight, folks arrived early and signed in at the registration desk promptly. They then proceeded to seat themselves. Nearly all had read or printed the agenda plan that we published on the COSUG web site. They already knew what they were there for. As they waited for the 4:00PM start, their noisy chatter as colleagues made it clear that there was no need for me to explain the meeting proceedings.

This was my first moment of awe. Keep in mind that the first COSUG meeting was October 21, 2004. Over the past 2 years, we have had roughly 100 fairly regular participants in the user group. The average meeting size has been in the high 30's. Most of the folks who were gathered on this particular evening had attended COSUG meetings in the past. I was humbled to realize that these people were well acquainted, enjoyed meeting and looked forward to getting to know more about each other. The idea of a COSUG meeting was something they were very comfortable with. All I had to do was stay out of their way.

Later, as I chatted with people over dinner, I gathered that the technical presentations went well. John McEleney arrived a bit late, but was generous with his time. He made it a point to speak to each room. John has an invigorating style of presenting his perspective on the mainstream 3d CAD market. His sense of the history and future for SolidWorks resonated with the audience. This was my next moment of awe. The gentleman I was listening to had just arrived in Colorado by airline (after attending a user group meeting in Wisconsin), rented a car and driven through an unfamiliar city. He plopped down a laptop and captivated us with a warm and engaging talk. John McEleney is absolutely committed to the user group network. His generosity in supporting SWUGN and his physical effort in doing so are astounding.

Speaking of SWUGN, the participants were very pleased to receive the fleece jackets, dress shirts, and T-shirts that SWUGN donated as door prizes. This kindness from SWUGN helped transform the meeting from "ordinary" to fun.

As we adjourned from the very packed meeting rooms, we walked out onto the patio for dinner. Festooned with strings of lights and an ocean of tables decked with splendid dinner settings, it was a perfect realm of hospitality. A light breeze and a full moon were stunning accessories. Chantel Kent was tasked with arranging this and she could not have done better! As we entered, we were given a pair of tickets for the wine bar and invited to choose a table. The meal was scrumptious! A dinner salad, perfect beef with asparagus spears and a small mound of spiced potato lanced with a sprig of saffron, followed by a desert of berries on a sweet white mousse.

Our normal dinner fare at a user group meeting is melon on a toothpick and a can of Sprite. This was an eye popping feast. Again, I was in awe. But wait! There's more...

As people took their seats for dinner, I grabbed the microphone and shouted a 2 minute invitation for all to attend future COSUG meetings. For the majority of those at the dinner this was their first user group experience. I tried to assure them that "normal" user group meetings were much less extravagant, but nonetheless worth attending. I then introduced John McEleney and handed over the microphone. I had hoped that he would spend a few minutes addressing the crowd before he had to leave for his next appointment.

John once again rose to the occasion. His review of actions taken by SolidWorks made it clear that he believes that collectively we have a responsibility to make a better world. He talked about his delight in the products that are designed using the tool that his company offers. He hinted at exciting new evolutions in software that will increase our productivity and allow us to focus on the design rather than on the CAD. He then invited us to ask any question



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and for the next hour fielded shots from the gallery. Each question was answered candidly and thoughtfully; a remarkable bit of on-the-feet extemporaneous speech.

I was struck by his decision to hold SolidWorks World 2007 in New Orleans. After the devastation of Katrina, I would not have expected a major investment like this to be risked in a place like that. John fully realizes the positive economic impact that a convention of 4,000 people will have on the city. He is doing this with the hope that it will benefit New Orleans and will help speed their recovery. Naturally, he invited us all to join him at SolidWorks World 2007.

John departed after receiving a rousing round of applause. Most of the attendees lingered for awhile to chat and mingle. As I worked the room, I met inventors, engineers, artists, business leaders, machine operators, salesmen, consultants, and visionaries. Each had their own agenda, but collectively the arc of their careers brought them to this moment. I can't help but feel that we all shared in a sense of greater purpose. Whether we work to develop medical instruments, transportation, machinery, artwork, research and development, general manufacturing, or construction we have a great deal in common. To be able to celebrate that hope for a better future in such magnificent style was a blessing.

As I sat at a table with Sue Evans, she said to me that she hoped people would understand how unique SolidWorks Corporation is. The software is good, but the commitment to community is the charm. She also wanted people to witness first hand the type of leadership that SolidWorks enjoys. The success and momentum of the company is not an accident. John McEleney is a treasure.

Sue Evans is the President of MCAD Technologies, a SolidWorks Value Added Reseller. Sue directed her entire organization to promote and fund this meeting. Her staff did an outstanding job of reaching out to the users in Colorado to invite them to attend. Yes, her goal is to have more people adopt SolidWorks as their design tool. Magically, she was able to host an event that was entirely focused on the people who use SolidWorks in her community. My fear that her marketing steamroller would overwhelm the meeting proved to be unjustified. Lest I use the word too much, let me say that her spirit of giving and sharing is awe inspiring.

As I left the meeting, I reflected on those who had volunteered their time for this occasion. The speakers certainly did their part. As the COSUG Board of Directors, Paul, Steve, Steve, Cathy, and Terry all spent time coordinating and planning. It was the confluence of effort by everyone who attended that transformed our hopes and plans into a gathering that exemplified the best that a user group meeting could be.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for participating in the Colorado SolidWorks User Group. Our next meeting is in December. Please visit <http://www.cosug.com> for further details.

Gerald Davis
Colorado SolidWorks User Group
303 984-9367