

Order of The Iron Test Pattern



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SO GOOD – SO FAR

Well, we've survived the first two weeks of managing this noble Order of the Iron Test Pattern. To bring you up to speed on what went on behind the scenes, we'll include a few bits of business and let you know what direction we plan to take. Your input is, of course, most welcome, should you think we are going aground or off into the wild blue yonder.

First let me say that I appreciated the title of Fleet Admiral, having been in Uncle Sam's Canoe Club for nigh onto 16 years; then, someone asked if we had misspelled Fleet Enema. I've been accused of being where the sun doesn't shine, but that was a bit too much. I took counsel with some of our trusted Sages and they came up with my new moniker and title, "Sagacious Pixel." Don't ask what it means; we're not sure if anyone knows.

LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE.

For those who don't know me, you've been lucky, so far. The rest of you can skip to the next paragraph. Permit me to introduce myself. I'll not bore you with my resume, but you may have seen my name in a few issues of Broadcast Engineering magazine where I hogged the Beyond the Headlines section for a few years; or in the Tech-Notes, an online newsletter I've published for over five years. I'd mention the post office bulletin board, but I think we got all those wanted posters removed. My FCC license, back in the days when it meant something to have one, has graced the walls of a few radio and television stations across the country. If you are really that desperate to know any more, give me a call and I'll burn your ears for an hour or two.

STOKING THE FIRES

For an organization that once had several thousand members, I was appalled when I heard the roster had a current listing of fewer than two hundred fifty. As I told Bob Vendeland, the Order's founder, "That SUCKS!"

In an effort to keep what appeared to be the last embers of the Order of the Iron Test Pattern glowing, the Order's founding father, Robert N. Vendeland, better known as Father Bob, contacted some of the remaining Sages in a last ditch effort to keep the flames burning. As a long time member, I have seen and heard the tales of the several "almost-restarts" of the "restarts" but was unaware that the then keepers of the flame were not in a position to fuel the fires any longer.

MOVING ON DOWN THE ROAD

With the blessings of loyal members and underwriters, Itelco, in the person of Howard McClure and Tom Newman, Father Bob consulted with himself and came up with the idea (or was having a gas attack) that he should find some poor bas-- rd to carry the torch and try to save what was left.

After many hour of cajoling, and threats of moving all Californians up here to Oregon, Father Bob got me to agree to at least consider it. Now if you want to chastise Father Bob, have at it. He can be reached at rnvendeland@cox.net

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

So the official press release read as follows: On September 12, 2002, in a reverse and bloodless coup d'état initiated by Itelco and egged on by Order of the Iron Test Pattern founding father, Bob Vendeland, Itelco forced the Tech-Notes staff, at telephone point, to take over the reins of leadership and government of the Sacred, Ancient, Honored, Respected (and a few other accolades we can't think of right now) Order of the Iron Test Pattern. An unidentified Tech-Notes spokesperson is reported to have said, "Why not; nothing else has gone right today." In a moment of lapsed sanity, an agreement was reached and immediately a junta was formed to bring about chaos or order, which ever will be the easier to achieve.

To make matters official, a change of command ceremony was held over the phone. To prevent musty and teary-eyed engineers from rusting equipment and fuse relays together from their sobbing, the event was held in a secret Port-a-potty off the coast of Iowa.

Sighs of relief could be heard from the Itelco offices in New Jersey as faraway as the bathroom, while political infighting began in the Tech-Notes offices to see who could think up the highest and most absurd rank to call themselves. Word has it that women and children have been cleared from the streets and religious leaders around the world have called for a day of something, but they can't think of what to call it -- as yet.

The Tech-Notes staff is reportedly looking for additional office space and real estate offices all over the entire west coast have closed so they won't have to deal with it. Rumor has it that they've put a deposit on an new office complex in Greenland, but are trying to figure out mileage and per diem cost for their office help.

Stay tuned for more to come. (and you thought the previous administration was strange)

KEEPING US ALL LIGET

Contrary to popular opinion, we've not been asleep at the helm. To be legal, we've incorporated in the state of Oregon as a limited liability company or LLC, have filed for and received an employee identification number (EIN) from the IRS and have a business license for the City of Florence. US Bank will now talk to us and we have an account there where the remaining funds from Itelco were deposited, along with a few valid checks for certificates and lapel pins that we got with the booty Itelco sent us. For those who had applications and checks that were over 6 months old, we contacted them and we took care of them as directed by the makers.

The cost and paperwork involved in filing for a non-profit corporation with both the state and the IRS is prohibitive at this time. Perhaps when we have built up some equity in the organization, we'll revisit this issue.

A REVELIE CALL

We then sent out a letter to our fellow television engineers to let them know that the Ancient, Honored and Respected Order of the Iron Test Pattern it is alive and well. That in a moment of weakness and/or insanity, we acquiesced to Father Bob's demands, wishes and anything else a man in his seventies does to get someone else to do something.

Here comes the hard part. To continue the fine traditions (if there are any), it will be necessary to find new members, especially among our underpaid, long-suffering and under-appreciated '*Survivors*' ranks, so we can recognize and honor them in a manner befitting such an ordeal.

GETTING YOU ASSOCIATES TO JOIN

Membership in the Sacred, Ancient, Honored, Respected (and a few other accolades I can't think of right now) Order of the Iron Test Pattern is very easy to achieve, if the interested person can fill out a form and mail it. God only knows we engineer have to do that often enough.

There are no dues nor are there any initiation fees. To join, simply go to our website: <http://www.OITP.org> and click on the "***How to Join***" tab. This page tells them about the requirements and how to qualify for the various ranks. You might want to check there to see if you are eligible for an upgrade or reinstatement. Click on the application link, print the application, fill it in and follow the directions on how to return it.

To obtain a certificate of membership, suitable for framing and prominent display, and/or a lapel pin that can be used as a tie tack also, is simple. The costs are spelled out, with examples posted. Batteries are not included and continued use may be habit forming, or may cause the loss of hair on an unmentionable part of the body. Most folks like to have both the certificate and pin and send in a check to cover the costs with their application.

OCCUPYING TIME AND SPACE ON THE INTERNET

We've finally gotten our very own website with our very own URL: <http://www.OITP.org>. If you haven't been there, it is quite different from the old site hosted by Itelco.

WHAT IT TAKES

None of these things come cheap. We need underwriters so that we can give the membership the kinds of services they so richly deserve. Among these identified to date, is a periodical newsletter, (like this one) a presence at not only NAB, but at other television industry related conventions and other such things as the membership would like to see occur.

To help financially stabilize the Order, we have developed a business card page on the website. The spaces go for \$10/month or \$100/year. We will take company logos and info and put that in one of the spaces on a first-come; first-positioning basis. There is no limit to the number of cards we will post on that page and we will post competitors, but not next to each other.

I tried to scan some cards, but they looked like crap and I have a very good scanner. I'll pass anything by the card person before it goes online. The space will be similar to what you see as examples already there.

Another way to generate funds is to have underwriters for the various pages on the website. I don't like blaring adds, so we'll put a link at the top to the advertising below the OITP business. There will also be links at the top and bottom to the poster's business. The front page is taken, but the other pages: Subscriptions, History, News, Links, How to Join, NAB MEET, FAQ, Archive and Rogues' Gallery, are available at \$75/mo or \$750/year each. On those pages, the underwriter will be the only one – exclusive to that page. The front page is an example.

LOOKING GOOD

By all ways of judging, the website is an instant success. In the first three days we had the counter on the OITP website, we had over 175 different visitors. Not bad for a new site.

We are also looking for underwriters for this online newsletter. At this time there are fewer than 300 subscribers. We expect that to change soon as we have an active recruitment program going on right now. Space is negotiable. Call or e-mail our offices so we can talk.

RATE GRABBING – (AN OLD NAVY TERM)

Once we get up and running, we'll also be reviewing the membership ranks in an effort to see that those promotions that are past due are bestowed on those eligible. If the recipient

wishes a new certificate showing his advancement, they can let us know as spelled on the website. So if you are a member and have lost contact with us, let us know who you are and how we can contact you.

FILLING THE VOID

We once had several thousand members, but Bob Vendeland, our founder, says that the average age of today's membership is dead. So, if you are alive, or know someone who is and you've worked in television or a related field for more than fifteen minutes, you can qualify for the newly formed rank of "Page?" The other ranks are explained on the website.

We now have this newsletter and we have a forum. All members are subscribed to both. You can unsubscribe yourself from either on the website, if you don't want to be THAT involved. You are welcome to respond to this newsletter. I also invite each and every one of you who are interested to call me and speak with me directly; remember, I'm on the West Coast. I do value your sage input and advice, but not from the East Coast when you first get into your office at 8AM.

I am looking forward to hearing from you about the future of the Order of the Iron Test Pattern. If you care not to call but would like me to call you, please let me know when would be a good time. Let's make it work!

ASSIGNMENT OF JOBS

September 15, 2002. In a move that barely had any impact on anyone living or dead, except Chuck Pharis, Sagacious Pixel Larry Bloomfield appointed Pharis to the exalted position of Custodian and Keeper of the Trusted Antique Television Cameras and with this appointment, Pharis now has all the rights, privileges and honors that go with such a trusted and honored position. Keep checking back here for further appointments, as the need arises.

CLOSING QUOTE

"Amateur Radio is the only fail-safe communications service in the world."
---- Riley Hollingsworth, FCC

A LITTLE HUMOR – VERY LITTLE HUMOR

Just in case we got too serious here, here's something to ponder. When engineers have far too much spare time on their hands or their deadly at Scrabble, you'll get some like what follows. This has to be one of the cleverest things to cross our desk. (Wait till you see the last one!)

George Bush:
When you rearrange the letters: He bugs Gore

Dormitory:

When you rearrange the letters: Dirty Room

Evangelist:

When you rearrange the letters: Evil's Agent

Desperation:

When you rearrange the letters: A Rope Ends It

The Morse Code:

When you rearrange the letters: Here Come Dots

Slot Machines:

When you rearrange the letters: Cash Lost in em

Animosity:

When you rearrange the letters: Is No Amity

Mother-in-law:

When you rearrange the letters: Woman Hitler

Snooze Alarms:

When you rearrange the letters: Alas! No More Z's

A Decimal Point:

When you rearrange the letters: I'm a Dot in Place

The Earthquakes:

When you rearrange the letters: That Queer Shake

Eleven plus two:

When you rearrange the letters: Twelve plus one

And for the grand finale:

President Clinton of The USA:

It can be rearranged (With no letters left over, and using each letter only once) into:

To copulate he finds intern

CONFIDENCE IN YOUR PRODUCT

And finally, 20 executives board an airplane and are told that the flight that they are about to take is the first ever to feature pilot-less technology:

It is an un-crewed aircraft. Each one of the CEOs is then told, privately, that their company's software is running the aircraft's automatic pilot system.

Nineteen of the CEOs promptly leave the aircraft, each offering a different type of excuse. One CEO alone remains on board the jet, seeming very calm indeed.

Asked why he is so confident in this first un-crewed flight, he replies: "If it's the same software that runs my company's computer systems, this plane won't even take off."

THE FADE TO REAL LIFE

Well that's about it for this time. As we said earlier on, stay tuned – things can only get better! – But only with your help. Tell a friend or associate about us.

Until next time FADE TO BLACK! ☺ .