



# CAPE COD TIMES

Cape Cod, Mass., Technology  
Council Holds Networking  
Breakfast

By Ethan Zindler

HYANNIS, Mass.--Pocket protectors, slide rules, Scotch-taped eyeglasses, and high-water chinos were absent from the Cape Codder Motel ballroom yesterday morning.

But the geeks were definitely in the house.

The Cape Cod Technology Council's monthly networking breakfast welcomed 65 members of the local tech community and featured remarks from Paul Glen, author of "Leading Geeks: How to Manage and Lead People who Deliver Technology" (Jossey-Bass, \$ 26.95). Geeks are a special breed who can't be managed like other rank-and-file members of the corporate world, Glen said. They are motivated less by material rewards than personal satisfaction with their work. They deliberately ignore formal hierarchies. They admire Mr. Spock of "Star Trek" for his obsession with rationality.

And they like free food.

Glen says that managers often attempt to lead geeks in the same way they do other, less individualistic members of their teams. Inevitably, they fail as a result.

"Leadership is not about the leaders, it's about the relationship," said Glen as he displayed a Microsoft PowerPoint slide that read, "Geeks are more loyal to their technology than they are to you."

A frequent problem in the manager-tech worker relationship is that superiors are less familiar with the latest technology than their subordinates.

"Invariably, whoever is doing the work knows more about it than you do," he said.

Glen, a management consultant who has advised technology companies and taught at several master's of business administration programs, readily admits to being a geek. And he defended his creed against accusations that it squandered billions of investor dollars on pointless technology startup during the roaring'90s.

"I think a lot of what went on during the dot-com era was mistaken productivity," he said. "I don't think that was real geek culture. The vast majority of geeks had nothing to do with the dot-com boom."

Glen's talk appeared to be received warmly by local technology managers in the audience.

"I thought it was excellent," said Richard Goldin, an account executive with Webfodder, a Hyannis-based Web technology development company.

Goldin, who attended the breakfast with his shirt buttoned all the way to the top, admitted that he was "somewhat of a geek." He described Glen's characterization of geeks was "very accurate."

But at least one critic has been less charitable in assessing Glen's portrayal of geek-kind.

A recent review of "Leading Geeks" in The Boston Globe said it represented "the case of an intriguing magazine article being stretched on the literary rack into a tortured book."

Glen said he was unconcerned about negative reviews.

"In part, my goal was to start a conversation about this," said Glen. "The goal is to make people think about it."