WATERLOO TECHNICAL SOCIETY
Meeting Minutes - 12 November 2003

The 12 Nov 2003 meeting of the Waterloo Technical Society was held at the Greenstreets Restaurant located at the Cedar Falls Holiday Inn, with 31 members, 1 speaker, and 2 guests attending (34 dinners total). President Dick Michael called the meeting to order at 7:25 PM. Guests were introduced and past presidents and honorary members, and current officers for 2003-04 were recognized. President Dick Michael read the minutes from the 8 Oct 2003 WTS meeting. Co-Treasurer Dave Berry presented the financial report with a current balance of $842.72 for the month ending 31 October 2003.

Old Business:
Dick Michael noted that Tim Shoenfelder brought the website up to date since the last meeting. When asked how many of those present had looked at the site, a number of people raised their hand.

New Business:
None

Program: Chairman Tim Schoenfelder

Topic: ***ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE Technology***

Speaker: Andrew Drenner

Andrew Drenner received a B.S. in Computer Science at the University of Northern Iowa. He is presently a NSF Fellow pursuing a Ph.D. in Computer Science at the University of Minnesota. The focus of his Ph.D. research involves applications in Artificial Intelligence.

Andrew said the mission of his work was to create impressive robots, smaller than a can of soda, which were robust enough to be fired from a 40 mm rocket launcher and which could cooperate with other robots to solve problems. Much of his work was oriented toward military reconnaissance, surveillance, counter-terrorism and urban search and rescue activities. These would be small enough to go into small openings and have the capability to maneuver over obstacles by jumping, grappling, etc. His objective is to create a class of low cost robots, which could be programmed to have complimentary capabilities and could combine to accomplish tasks better than a single larger robot. His current robots cost about $12,000 but he is looking at ways to reduce the cost to under $400.

He was also working with a larger class of robots to serve as support for the small robots. Much of his work involves developing the software for a sliding scale of automation. This includes applications of Artificial Intelligence to allow simple control of multiple robots.

Video clips and papers can be found at http://distrob.cs.umn.edu/index.php

Andrew brought along and demonstrated several of the small robots before and after the meeting.

The meeting ended with Tim Shoenfelder presenting the WTS medallion to Andrew. The November 03 WTS meeting at Greenstreets was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dick Michael, President