



# ANNUAL MEETING 2024

February 10, 2024, 11:30 AM  
Prepared by Doug Paradis, DPRG Secretary

## Agenda

- Carl Ott, 2021 DPRG president and pro-temp president for 2022 to 2024 due to the Covid pandemic, discussed the state of the club.
- The candidates for 2024 officer positions were introduced.
- The 2024 election was closed after all attendees had a chance to vote.
- Ron Grant, the election overseer, combined the votes received prior to the meeting by email and the votes made at the meeting, and announced the election results.
- The new president took office.
- The new president presided over the 2024 annual planning meeting.
- The club's 2024 annual planning meeting agenda:
  - Paul Bouchier, the 2024 president, discussed his vision of the club direction for upcoming year.
  - Suggestions and ideas on how to make the club better from attending members.
- A member "show and tell" of robots.

## Outgoing President Summary of 2023

Carl Ott summarized the club activities of 2023:

- Robot Builders Night Virtual (online replacement for RBNO)
  - 50 meetings per year:
    - Approximately 12 to 20 people for 2 to 3 hours of discussion.
    - Between 50 and 100 YouTube views per meeting.
  - Participants from around the USA and Canada
    - New members from community
- Relations between DMS and DPRG. Carl has met with DMS's board and characterized the relationship between the two organizations as good.
- In person robot competitions:
  - Roborama Indoor Competition in May.
  - RoboColumbus Outdoor Competition in November.
  - 20-plus competitors and 6 to 8 robots.
- Carl's observations:
  - Gradual Evolution from single embedded node platforms to 'distributed' architecture.
  - Competitions bring common challenges and targets, which provide thrilling experiences.
  - Discussions are branching into newer / emerging technologies.
  - Facilitated online interaction provides "Social Glue" for fun times hanging out.

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## Officer Candidates for 2024

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The candidates for club officers were introduced:

**President:** Paul Bouchier

**Vice-President:** Carl Ott

**Treasurer:** Steve Edwards

**Secretary:** Doug Paradis

**Librarian:** John Kuhlenschmidt

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## Election of Officers for 2024

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Ron Grant, the election overseer, combined the votes received prior to the meeting by email, written proxies, and the votes made by members at the meeting. He announced that the proposed slate of officers was elected with 21 of the 28 members voting (75% of members) for everyone on the slate with no objections.

A quorum of members attended the meeting.

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## New President Address

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Paul Bouchier, the DPRG president for 2024, set the goal for the club to recover from the covid-blues and renew, reinvigorate, and regenerate.

- Paid-up members should be principally responsible for making club matter decisions.
- There is a need to rebuild membership numbers and increase active participation.
- The club should target younger potential members.
- Membership should deliver value for the money and time spent.
- The current weekly RBNV and the two planned competitions should continue.
- Improve club communications – replace the current free mail list server.

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## New Club Communication Committee

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A proposal was passed to form a committee to seek out a better solution for club communications than the current free Mail List server hosted by Dreamhost. The goal is to find a modern communication method that appeals to younger members and is not too hard to use and maintain. The following members volunteered to be part of the Club Communication committee:

- Steve Edwards
- Harold Pulcher
- Raj Prabhakar
- Paul Bouchier

The following topics were discussed by the attending members:

- **Move the monthly meeting** from the second Saturday to a different date and time to better fit in with the resources of the Dallas Maker Space (DMS).  
-- Decision was to conduct a survey of members for an alternate date and time.
  
- **Create an orientation for new members** website page to help new members be aware of how the club works and the opportunities available.  
-- Decision was to proceed and create a new webpage on dprg.org. Doug Paradis said he would champion the task.
  
- **Change dues charged for club membership** from \$40.  
-- Decision was not to change the cost to join the club, \$40 per year, and that both local and remote members would be charged the same amount.
  
- **The idea to create a “snippet” library** for members only that would contain donated pieces of personal code for member use. Alternatively, create a page with a list of good tutorial links.  
-- Decision was to table at this time.

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## Ideas for Future Presentations at Monthly Meeting

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The attending members were asked to provide the topic that they would most like to see presented at the DPRG monthly meeting.

### List of Ideas:

- Basic AI course
- Subsumption
- QT simulation
- AI object recognition
- AI pipeline – data to weights
- How to connect things to robot overview
- PID loops
- Balancing robot
- Pixy, MV, etc. camera breakdown
- Glossary of 27 common robotics related terms
- AI recognition – detection to touching object
- Launchpadincubator.org presentation
- PCB building – design to submitting order
- SLAM without ROS
- Sample Retrieval competition in August
- Communication with SRS to how they are handling post-covid

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## Show and Tell

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David Steele showed a 4-motor robot that might be used outdoors as well as indoors. He described how the ESC he is using requires pausing before switching direction. People told him this is expected behavior for some controllers. To not require pausing at neutral, the ESC needs to have forward-reverse mode. If the ESC description says it is forward-stop-reverse or forward-break-reverse, it will require a pause at neutral. Some have a switch to control that behavior, which is intended to prevent wrecking gears.

Ron Grant showed a nicely designed robot 4-link arm that puts all the motors at the base to lower inertia. It appears to have very good location resolution based on laser writing performed using the arm.

Mike Williamson displayed his indoor robot and explained the parts and sensor he used. Mike also demonstrated the robot showing off its obstacle sensing, which uses three 8x8 ToF sensors. In addition to motor encoders the robot uses tracking follower wheels. He showed the robot behavior when approaching a can.

Doug Paradis displayed a well-designed and cute 4 legged “dog” robot PiDog kit from SunFounders.com.

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## Additional Documentation of the Annual Meeting

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- YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeHxSr3X44o&t=9s>
- Slide deck with comments from Paul Bouchier: <https://www.dprg.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/DPRG-2024-Annual-Meeting.pdf>