

IEEE SSCS DL Paul Wesling Visits SSCS Lehigh Valley Chapter

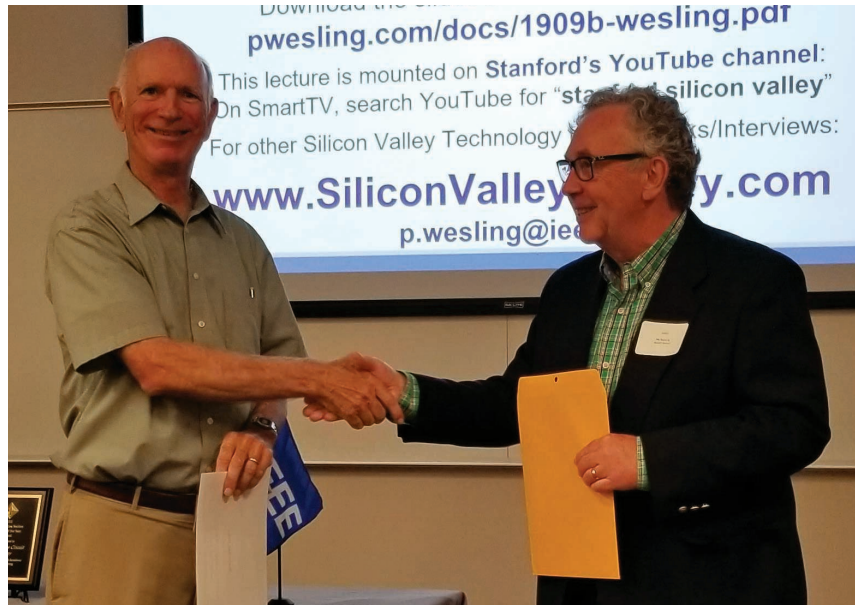
IEEE Life Fellow Paul Wesling, [Hewlett-Packard (retired) and past communications director for the IEEE San Francisco Bay Area Council] presented the lecture “The Origins of Silicon Valley: Why and How It Happened” for the Lehigh Valley Section of the IEEE Solid-State Circuits Society (SSCS) at Lehigh University on 25 September 2019.

Wesling began by motivating the audience with an anecdote about how the famous Silicon Valley innovation partnership of Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs grew their venture from a garage in Los Altos to the most valuable brand in the world. He asked, “How could this happen?” and “Why in the San Francisco Bay area?”

Wesling continued with a concise history from the agricultural days of 1880 to the formation of Federal Telegraph and the invention of the Audion vacuum tube in the early 1900s. A key concept of Federal Telegraph was raising funds from angel investors (an early example of venture capital) and close involvement with Stanford University, California. Current events, economic motivation, and, especially, independent wealth available from the California gold rush played roles.

The ham radio subculture of camaraderie and egalitarianism resulted

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SSCS Lehigh Valley Chapter Chair Robert Peruzzi (right) thanks Paul Wesling for his lecture and visit.

in a spirit of competitiveness and collaboration that carried forward to the Home Brew Computer Club and today's Silicon Valley. By 1947, Silicon Valley was the “big dog” of electronics centers, and, by the 1960s, it was central to the U.S. defense effort and the manufacturing economy. Wesling spoke about the Silicon Valley business climate, contrasting its decentralized structure to the East Coast's large, vertically integrated firms. He made the important point that, since the 1870s, California has not enforced noncom-

pete clauses, and he concluded with a reading list of recommended books.

In keeping with the spirit and philosophy of Silicon Valley, Wesling made his slides and a video recording of his talk available. The slides can be found at <http://www.pwesling.com/docs/1909b-wesling.pdf>, and the video recording can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRDB_W6POys.

—Robert O. Peruzzi
Lehigh Valley Section SSCS
Chapter Chair



Wesling (right) presents his talk on the origins of Silicon Valley.