

YOU WANT IT WHEN!?



What do glam and avant garde rock star Brian Eno, AGMA and Seattle Gear Works have in common?

Admittedly, not much. But there is a connection of sorts.

In 1996, Eno was among a number of individuals credited with founding the Long Now Foundation, (www.longnow.org). No, it is not a cult. Rather, it was established “to develop the Clock and Library projects, as well as becoming the seed of a very long-term cultural institution. The Long Now Foundation hopes to provide a counterpoint to today’s ‘faster/cheaper’ mindset and promote ‘slower/better’ thinking. We hope to creatively foster responsibility in the framework of the next 10,000 years.”

According to the group’s website, “Civilization is revving itself into a pathetically short attention span.” As a result, a project was initiated by Long Now member and computer scientist Daniel Hillis, who lays claim to developing the “massive parallel” architecture for today’s super computers. The project?—“I think it is time for us to start a long-term project that gets people thinking past the mental barrier of an ever-shortening future,” says Hillis. “I would like to propose a large—think Stonehenge—mechanical clock, powered by seasonal temperature changes. It ticks once a year, bongs once a century, and the cuckoo comes out every millennium.”

Known as the “10,000 Year Clock,” Hillis and his group have hopes that the project, to be installed in the side of a mountain in eastern Nevada, “would do for thinking about time what the photographs of Earth from space have done for thinking about the environment.”

Obviously, people with short attention spans would not be considered Long Now candidates. But many of us can relate to what Hillis is saying. Who hasn’t wondered “where does the time go?” How can one possibly keep abreast of all the new technology in communications and elsewhere that seems to proliferate on a daily basis? What gear shop manager hasn’t asked why customers always seem to need their order yesterday?

Perhaps in response to those questions, Seattle Gear Works (www.thegearworks.com) commissioned a gear art sculpture inspired by the 10,000 Year Clock. The work, created by Stuart Kendall of Seattle Solstice (stuart@seattlesolstice.com), an enclave of artists/engineers creating outsized works of art hewn from stone and other materials, incorporates gearing made of interwoven jade gear elements that form a rising arch topped off with the AGMA logo. Also incorporated are polished monel shafting and LED illumination, supported by a pedestal base of “timeless” granite. In addition, Kendall is involved in the creation of the 10,000 Year Clock’s stone gears and the cavern in which the clock will be housed.

The sculpture was auctioned last March at the annual AGMA meeting in Orlando, FL, and the proceeds were used to create the Don McVittie Memorial Scholarship Fund in remembrance of Don’s passing last year. The fund will help provide much needed support for the education of engineering students who are pursuing a career in the gear industry.

So the next time our 24/7 world fills your head to near bursting, take a moment and—just chill.