

IEEE WIE NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2001

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WIEC RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS EXISTENCE

This column received many thoughtful responses to its November article, "Why have a Women in Engineering Committee." Because many of the comments and questions reflect important concerns that IEEE members have about the existence of the WIE Committee (WIEC), some of them are being shared in this column, along with our responses.

A number of questions have been paraphrased and, in some cases, combined to preserve the writer's anonymity. More questions and answers will be posted on the WIE Web site in the future at "<http://www.ieee.org/women>".

Comment: It would be great to have equal representation by all parties, but it would be foolish to think that will happen all the time. I have no problem with a woman becoming an engineer or whatever she chooses. There should be equal opportunity for employment and education, which does not necessarily mean there will be equal representation. Less professional individuals tend to treat these articles as a "manifest destiny," which takes the argument too far. My work group is largely Asian, but I am not Asian. Should I contend that more people of my race should be present?

Response: It is misguided to set quotas, requiring a statistically equal representation for every individual work group, company or profession. It is also true that many interpret the call for equal opportunity in this way, and many are threatened by the concept. Perhaps they fear it is the first step down the "slippery slope" toward quotas. The WIEC does not intend to launch any effort forcing quotas or suggesting mandates for equal representation.

Comment: It's discouraging and unfair that gender-based (sexist) professional organizations such as this exist. Women are given special encouragement to enter engineering and special treatment once they do. This has occurred for decades. Still, engineers are primarily males. Women and men simply like different things and have different abilities. This is why most engineers are male and this shouldn't be thought of as a problem.

Response: The purpose of the WIEC is not to provide an unfair advantage to women, but to make sure that girls (and women) who DO have an interest in science and math, and DO have the ability, are not discouraged. Many

engineers share your opinion that organizations such as the WIEC exist to provide unfair advantage. That is not our intention, and we will likely have to 'agree to disagree' on this issue for now.

Comment: Many intelligent people do not see engineering as an attractive profession. Until this perception changes, we aren't likely to see the same change in demographics as occurred in law and medicine. The only way to get the cultural change we need in the United States and to get smart people (men and women) into engineering is through television. "LA Engineer" with a female in the leading role is not a joke. If we improve the image of engineering as a profession, the percentage of women going into engineering will shoot up to 50 percent as is now the case in law and medicine.

Response: We agree that until engineering is perceived as an attractive profession, this cultural change in engineering will be a challenge. As unfortunate as it is, television is the key to much public perception. In several forums and discussion groups, the concept of a television program featuring engineers in non-stereotypical roles has been discussed. Most often, this is dismissed as non-substantive fluff. Perhaps the time is right to consider a mainstream media, public relations effort.

The WIEC thanks all who took the time to write. Only through open and honest discussion can we better understand all viewpoints, and ultimately, make a difference in our profession.

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2001 CANADIAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING WEEK

Date: Friday, 2 March 2001
Location: Fairmont Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, ON, Canada
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Contact: Lisa Kenny (lkenny@columbia.ca)

Join Canadian Space Agency astronaut Julie Payette, ing. and hundreds of young people from across Canada for the launch of the 10th National Engineering Week (NEW) in Ottawa on 2 March. This week will be dedicated to make young Canadians aware of the exciting career opportunities that await them in engineering, science and technology, and to celebrate Canada's engineering excellence and the outstanding achievements of Canadian engineers.

The celebration will include a contest on *The Great Canadian Engineering Space Request* designed to inform young Canadians of the many space-related engineering achievements and highlight the many opportunities that engineering offers Canadian youths. The prize includes a private lunch with Julie and a package of other neat prizes.

For more information on NEW and the NEW activities taking place in various locations across Canada, please log on to <http://www.new-sng.com>.

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Celebrate Women's History Month in March along with the IEEE History Center. Visit http://www.ieee.org/organizations/history_center/whm.html to read the life stories of female electrical and computer engineers who have made significant contributions to their fields. As you read their life stories, they have one word in common, **first!**

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WOMEN ELECTED IEEE FELLOW

Women that have been elected as 2001 Fellows are:

Ms. Bernadine Langdon Dunfee
Retired

For contributions to the design and development of highly accurate current ratio standards and voltage dividers.

Dr. Donna Lee Hudson
University of California, San Francisco

For contributions to the development of techniques for computer-assisted medical decision making.

Prof. Kei May Lau
University of Massachusetts

For contributions to III-V compound semiconductor heterostructure materials and devices.

Dr. Bozenna J. Pasik-Duncan
University of Kansas

For contributions to identification and stochastic adaptive control.

Dr. Sarah Ann Rajala
North Carolina State University

For contributions to engineering education.

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DR. MITRA DUTTRA WAS AWARDED THE IEEE-USA HARRY DIAMOND MEMORIAL AWARD

Mitra Duttra is the year 2000 winner of the IEEE-USA Harry Diamond Award. Her citation is: "For innovative design, characterization and realization of high performance heterostructure optoelectronic devices, and establishment of major research programs in this field."

This award was established to honor individuals for distinguished technical contributions in the field of electrotechnology while in U.S. government service. For more information about this award, please logon to <http://www.ieeeusa.org/AWARDS/award6.html>.

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IEEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 2001 NATIONAL SCOUT JAMBOREE

Members are needed to staff booths and to serve as merit badge instructors at the 15th National Scout Jamboree, to be held from 23 July - 1 Aug. at Fort A. P. Hill, Va., USA. The IEEE is the title sponsor of the Electronics Merit Badge booths and co-sponsor of the Electricity Merit Badge booths. The project was initiated by the IEEE Virginia Council and Region 3, and is being financially supported by the Regional Activities Board.

While individuals can volunteer for just one day, at least a two-day commitment is preferred. To volunteer, send an e-mail message with your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, requested volunteer position and available dates to John P. Castelvechi at MailTo: "john_castelvechi@dom.com".

For more information about the Jamboree, contact Ralph Russell at MailTo: "r.w.russell@ieee.org" or call +1 804 741 9429.

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2001 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS AND ENGINEERING MENTORING

The Executive Office of the President of the United States has established the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM) program. The program, administered on behalf of the White House by the National Science Foundation, seeks to identify outstanding mentoring efforts/programs designed to enhance the participation of groups underrepresented in science, mathematics and engineering. The awardees will serve as exemplars to their colleagues and will be leaders in the national effort to more fully develop the Nation's human resources in science, mathematics and engineering. Nominations to honor individuals and institutions are invited for the 2001 competition of these annual awards.

The deadline for nominations is April 26, 2001.

The program announcement, NSF 01-54, is available electronically via NSF's Online Document System at <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?nsf0154>

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WORLD CONFERENCE OF WOMEN ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS

The World Conference of Women Engineers and Scientists is coming to Ottawa, Canada in July 2002! This tri-annual conference has never been held in Canada since its inception in 1960! Visit our web site for a view of the exciting program with symposia on Global Climate Change, Ethics and Science, and Globalization and impact on women. There will be many exciting debates, workshops, roundtables, and up-to-date research on women in science and engineering. The cultural program will be as inviting as the scientific one and Ottawa is a delightful multi-lingual city full of parks, rivers, and a canal. Bring your family! Special programs are planned for accompanying persons and children. We hope to also have a strong participation of students and men.

For more information, log-on to <http://www.icwes12.org> or email: Cheryl_cadrin@carleton.ca (coordinator) with subject line: ICWES12

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A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE Ph.D. IN ENGINEERING & SCIENCE

Interested in reading more about women who have achieved success in the engineering world? Read A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE PH.D. IN ENGINEERING & SCIENCE. Written by Barbara B. Lazarus, Lisa M. Ritter & Susan A. Ambrose, this book focuses on women who have found success in academia, industry and the public sector. It also covers the emotional and social difficulties women may experience, and offers practical suggestions and advise for surviving and thriving in graduate school.

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WIE JOBS FILE FOR 2001

WIE has initiated a WIE Job Posting File with job postings that have been forwarded to us, unsolicited. If you would like to subscribe to this monthly posting file, send a message to majordomo@ieee.org and type: subscribe women-jobs. This file will be maintained on a monthly basis. If you have any comments on the file, or would like to submit posting information, please submit to WIE at women@ieee.org.

We are please to offer other IEEE sites that contains job listings:

*The IEEE-USA Jobs Listing Service on the www at www.ieeeusa.org/jobs.html

*IEEE Careers & Education Web Site: "Careers & Education, Enabling Careers through Life-long Learning" can be accessed at www.ieee.org/organizations/eab/careeresource.htm.

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IEEE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: SENIOR MEMBER

Senior Member is the highest IEEE membership grade that may be obtained by application. *Why Apply?* For recognition of accomplishment by peers for professional advancement for personal satisfaction *Who should apply?* Engineers, scientists, educators, technical executives or those in IEEE designated fields who have at least ten years active professional practice, with five or more years of significant performance, accomplishments in engineering, publications, management, education or professional contributions. We highly recommend all qualified IEEE members to apply for Senior Membership. Another reason to apply for Senior Member grade is that Senior Member grade is required before one is eligible for IEEE Fellow nomination. To obtain Senior Member Application forms, please contact:

IEEE Operations Center
Admission and Advancement Committee
445 Hoes Lane
PO Box 1331
Piscataway, NJ 088551331
Tel:(732) 562-5502 /Fax:(732)9810225
Email: rab.aa@ieee.org

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WIE COMMITTEE SCOPES OF INTEREST

- Scope 1:* Gather and disseminate information regarding the status of women and initiatives for, by and on behalf of women in engineering and science.
- Scope 2:* Enable mentoring and education programs within IEEE. Make available information regarding gender-related educational issues, which may improve the entry and retention of women in engineering programs.
- Scope 3:* Increase the participation and membership of women within IEEE.
- Scope 4:* Address ways to improve the climate for women in IEEE and the workplace.

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