

Newsletter #2, April 2003

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1. Editor's Note

Dear colleagues,

This newsletter summarizes recent contributions I have received.

The goal of this newsletter is to integrate more and more women in control theory/applications development and to keep everybody posted on events, so if you come across interesting articles, useful information on web, that you think might be useful for our community, please feel free to contribute. As well please don't forget about job openings in your schools, companies, new books, journals, software releases, conferences, workshops, etc. Just drop me a line following my references below:

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2. Opportunities for women, contributed by WiC Chair Anna-Maria Perdon

Ancona, April 8 2003-04-08

Dear Friends,

Almost four months are already passed after the “Women in Control luncheon” at the CDC in Las Vegas. I could not be with you then, but I will be next June in Denver and I hope to see you all there.

In my last message I shared some good news with you about the increased visibility of women in the society and the list of important awards obtained. As you know, Cheryl Schrader is now the President of the Control Systems Society (She is the second woman, following Jane Cullum, to be president of the CSS). I invite you to read “our” President message on The IEEE Control Magazine (February 2003) . Cheryl asks all members of the society to focus with renewed enthusiasm on fulfilling the “mission” of the CSS, namely “the advancement of theory and practice of control engineering and science” . I would add an invitation to recall the “mission” of our group, namely “promoting membership, gathering, and disseminating appropriate information about women in the IEEE Control Systems Society and the profession and facilitating the development of mentoring and programs to promote the retention, recruitment, and growth of women CSS members”. Recent important initiatives such as the first workshop for high school students and teachers organized in Las Vegas last December by Bozenna , the proposed “NSF-CSS Mentoring Travel Grants for Women ”, the First Workshop for Women Graduate Students and Recent Ph.D'S in conjunction with the 2003 CDC all go in this direction. I invite all of you to give all your support to make these initiatives successful. I am glad to remark that the control Systems Society is doing extremely well in recognizing women in control (just give a look to the section “achievements” in our home page to see how long and rich is the list of important positions held by women in the society and of awards obtained), but we are still a minority in the CSS. The hard job for women is balancing research, teaching, service, and family life. However, if we want to do better and better, we must remember that volunteering work is important and is usually highly appreciated and recognized. The majority of women involved in the society comes from U.S. but there are also many female contributors from other countries. A successful joint “IEEE-IFAC WiC luncheon” in Barcelona, last June, with the presence of 30 women scientists from 15 countries, was an attempt to bring more diversity to the CSS. We should try to organize “WiC” meetings at other conferences and workshops, in U.S. and in other countries.

A few announcements:

* The European community is making an effort to promote positive actions towards gender equality. In particular, there is a need for women evaluators for the FP6 proposals (Sixth Framework Program), in particular for women scientists. Let's submit you candidature

<http://emmf6.cordis.lu/index.cfm?fuseaction=wel.welcome>

* The “ Third European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education” will take place in Genoa, April 13th-16th. (You can obtain more information from the WiC home page)

If some of you can go, please do it and... let us know if something interesting has been said.

I expect you all in Denver,

yours affectionately,

Anna Maria

3. IEEE Control Systems Society Public Information Web Page , Contributed by Molly Shor, Chair, IEEE CSS Standing Committee on Public Information

The IEEE Control Systems Society is starting a new initiative to share information on our Public Information web pages on the research and education activities that are ongoing in our community. The audience for this web page is students, professional colleagues, and the general public. We would like to highlight scientific, technical, and educational accomplishments.

We currently have nine viewgraphs posted on the web, including a few by women colleagues. It would be exciting to have quite a few more from the women in our field, to highlight their activities. So, I would encourage all of you to submit viewgraphs.

In order to have the most impact, a highly visual and succinct form is requested, as you would see in Scientific American. Pictures are important. Please share an important research or educational accomplishment and why it matters, and display it in the most forceful manner.

Please send us only one viewgraph, along with a descriptive paragraph that highlights your most outstanding research/education accomplishment. The viewgraph should contain the problem statement, a photograph or diagram, the approach/accomplishment, and if appropriate, any publicity it received. Please send them via e-mail in PowerPoint format. We will also accept a one-page landscape .pdf file of the same size, dimensions and layout as a PowerPoint viewgraph.

Sample viewgraphs (the first nine contributions) and a template for the viewgraphs are available on the web at

<http://ece.oregonstate.edu/~shor/CSS-Public-Information/>

Viewgraph contributors are encouraged to update their viewgraphs as the activities and accomplishments that they would like to highlight evolve.

Best regards,

Molly Shor (and Kishan Baheti)

4. Women in Control luncheon in ACC03, Contributed by: Linda Bushnell

Please make your plans to join us at the next WiC meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, June 4, 2003 12:30pm at the ACC'03 in Denver, CO. The web site for the ACC'03 is

<http://acc2003.me.berkeley.edu/>

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5. NSF Advance Fellow Program, Contributed by: Linda Bushnell

The next round of the ADVANCE Fellows proposals is due to the US NSF on June 16, 2003. These should be especially interesting to women faculty in research positions as the Fellows award provides salary to faculty who have had career limitations or have never held a tenure track position. The web site is at:

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02121/nsf02121.htm>

Be sure to read the eligibility criteria.

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6. IEEE membership statistics, contributed by Linda Bushnell

The CSS ExCom recently received info from the IEEE (Al Mac Rae, TAB Representative to the Membership Development Committee) on membership numbers as of January 2003. The CSS membership as of Jan 2003 is 9730, a drop of 6.3% from 2002 (10381 members). Over 90% of the Societies suffered a decrease in membership in this past year.

More interesting is the age distribution of the IEEE excluding student members. From the IEEE, "In addition, data from recent years, indicate that the average age of IEEE members is increasing. Age profile data from some societies exhibit peaks that are highly skewed towards the right, indicating that these societies will suffer major membership decreases in the near future unless they start recruiting young members."

I bring this up because it relates to Annamaria's message about the WiC mission of promoting membership (in IEEE/CSS). Cheryl's call to the ExCom, and eventually to the whole CSS, is "[how do we attract 'young' members?](#)"

The workshops that Annamaria mentions in her letter are leading us in the right direction. Perhaps we should think as WiC members, how we can attract more "young" WiC members.

Sincerely,
Linda

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7. WIC—an important network for our children, contributed by Bozena Pasik-Duncan

Dear Friends,

I have just come back from a trip to the East and West coasts, visiting Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Williams, and Stanford University, where my 18-year-old daughter, Dominique, has applied. She has taken over 30 courses from the University of Kansas while being at school, but she wants to attend a top university next year. The trip was a terrific experience for me. I have visited many American universities, but they were always research visits. This time I focused on math, science, and engineering education. I have learned more than I ever expected by visiting and sitting in on classes together with Dominique. I observed a beautifully friendly way of teaching math at Williams College, which used a very interactive learning process. I was told that the best and most enthusiastic professors teach freshman courses. This is unfortunately not the case at my university. I learned that there are still few senior female faculty members at math departments at the universities previously mentioned, but there are usually 50% female students. I was obsessively asking questions about women in math during the tours.

Dominique has benefited beautifully from our “Women in Control” network. We visited Naomi Leonard, one of our WIC members and a professor, as well as a former undergraduate student at Princeton. It was very important for Dominique to speak with a female faculty member from that university. Big thanks go to Naomi for her advising and mentoring. I would like to assure those who question the need of our network that not only can we benefit in a very positive way, but also our children need role models, and my daughter’s case can stand as an example.

Today Dominique learned that she received the most distinguished scholarship from our university to study (math and classics) in the Honors Program. In one week she will learn about the other universities. We still don’t know what she will choose. It is fascinating for me to observe and to participate in the process of a young girl making choices. This is a new experience for me. I didn’t go through American education. I came to this country as an established scholar. It is fascinating to participate in the career of a young girl, to see through her eyes, and to read her mind. Many of you have children, and I am sure that almost all of you have younger children. One day you will be in my situation. Let us explore our network—I can see our new role as mentors for our own children. Let us start exchanging information about workshops or summer schools for K-12 students. We could arrange a summer camp for our children sometime.

Dominique will graduate in May from high school, and my mother, who will celebrate her 91st birthday in a few days, wants to be here to see her granddaughter’s graduation. My mother was here when Dominique was born, she took care of her every year for at least 6 months until Dominique was 16, and now she is scared of us traveling because of the war. My mother went through two wars, and she is seriously upset and disturbed by this current war. However, she is not afraid of traveling, and so she will come to visit us. In the meantime she prays, every day and every night, for “peaceful resolution and for peaceful future for us and our children”.

There is a strong reason why I write about family to you at this time. Growing up in Poland with parents and relatives who survived wars taught me an important lesson: nothing is more important than family. I am grateful to those who taught me that important lesson. I wanted to share this lesson with you during this very difficult time, difficult time for those directly participating in the war, but also difficult time for all of us.

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