

The EDGE

Equality & Diversity In Geoscience and Engineering

June 1999

*Newsletter for the Division for Advancement of Women
in Engineering & Geoscience*

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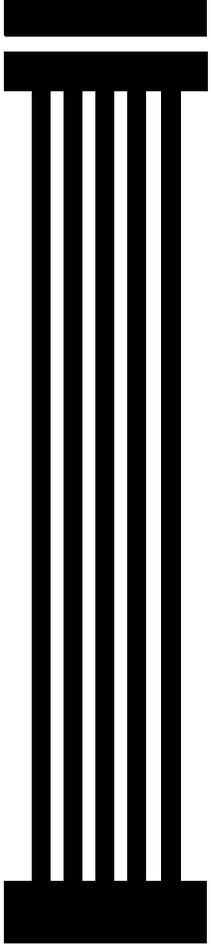
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DAWEG

*A Division of The Association Of Professional Engineers
and Geoscientists of British Columbia*

Engineering Fest A Celebration of Engineering Week

On Saturday February 27, 1999, DAWEG participated in the Festival of Engineering at the Vancouver Public Library – an event organized by the Vancouver Branch of APEGBC to celebrate National Engineering Week. DAWEG's display "Women in the Workplace" with its quiz questions, and the popular "Picture Yourself Here" coat rack figure were visited by numerous library patrons who were curious about the participation of women in the fields of engineering and geoscience. Many thanks to volunteers Judy Tai, Lisa Brown and Nicole Kohnert who fielded questions and represented DAWEG at this event.



Engineering Fest attendees check out DAWEG's "Women in the Workplace" display at Vancouver Public Library

From the Editor ...

Welcome to the Edge!! After much talk, we've adopted a new name for our newsletter that, we feel, reflects our goals in a catchy way — "equality and diversity in Geoscience & Engineering"!

You'll find more changes too. This issue is more than a record of past events, and notices of upcoming ones. The Edge is a forum for exchanging ideas and generating discussion. This issue should start the ball rolling!

We'd like to know what you think — about the newsletter, the ideas expressed by the contributors, or anything else you want to put on the record!

E-mail or fax me (see below), or e-mail DAWEG at daweg@mech.ubc.ca.

Linda McCoy Gobessi

DAWEG Newsletter Editor
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lgobessi@intellegodesigns.com

"The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express the views of DAWEG or APEGBC."

Interested in Starting a Consulting Business?

The Fraser Valley branch of APEGBC is hosting a workshop on June 12th for members interested in starting their own consulting business. Please forward the registration form below to anyone interested.

Time: 08:30 - 16:30

Location: Sheraton Guildford,
Tynehead 2

Cost: Pre-registration \$ 35.00 per person
At the door \$ 45.00 per person
(price includes lunch)

Parking Available: \$ 3.00

Please note, anyone who registers and fails to show up will be invoiced directly.

Registration and payment must be received by June 4, 1999 to ensure a seat and receive pre-registration price

Topics include how to start your own successful consulting firm, types of practices, accounting, marketing, liability insurance, and common reasons for failure when starting a new company. Many of the speakers are owners of successful consulting firms. To register, fill out the registration form below and fax to (604) 666-1261, Attention: S Maynard, or call (604) 666-8280.

**APEGBC
Fraser Valley Branch Workshop
Starting a Consulting Business**

June 12, 1999 08:30 to 16:30

Name:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Address:

Please make cheques payable to:
APEGBC Fraser Valley Branch
200 - 4010 Regent Street
Burnaby BC V5C 6N2
Canada

Eastern Update

Joanna Barnard, P.Eng.

Hello from Newfoundland. Some days it seems like I've only just arrived in St. John's, and other days it seems like years since I last saw the beaches and mountains of Vancouver. The truth is somewhere in between - I've been here about 9 months now. Work is going well, and my parents are delighted to have me closer. On the plus side, I've bought a really nice condo for less than half what it would cost in Vancouver; on the minus side, although it has been a "good" St. John's winter, there has still been too much ice and too much wind for my liking.

Surprise, surprise, after surviving the organizing of our Women in the Workplace: Achieving Harmony Conference in May 1998 in Vancouver, I allowed myself to be persuaded to join the organizing committee of the July 2000 conference in St. John's Newfoundland.

New Frontiers, New Traditions - a National Conference for the Advancement of Women in Engineering, Science and Technology will be held July 6-8, 2000 in St. John's, Newfoundland. This event will be the eighth in the series of CCWEST (Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science and Technology) conferences.

The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for discussion about and among women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The conference is intended to provide career support and networking opportunities for women in STEM, the dissemination of research related to the status and role of women in STEM, leadership in changing the traditions for women, exposure for young women to the excitement and challenge of careers in STEM, and an increase in public awareness of the contributions of women in these fields.

To date, planned topics include career success in the petroleum/resource industries, hands-on demonstration of software interesting for girls, non-traditional career paths in IT, leadership skills and professional development in academic and industrial settings, and programs to attract girls into science and engineering. There will be invited talks, seminars, workshops, papers and poster sessions, and many opportunities for discussions with colleagues from across the country.

We hope that as many of you as possible will come to the conference, and will contribute through these formats. A general call for papers will be distributed shortly.

We want to be sure that the conference provides you with the information and the results that you would like to find. For that reason, we are issuing an early invitation to CCWEST members (and that includes all DAWEG members) to suggest program elements and themes that would be valuable.

Please send any program suggestions to me at jbarnard@acres.com or fax (709) 754 2717. Tell us as much as you can about your idea, intended audience, and possible providers (volunteers are welcome!). We are particularly interested in suggestions for keynote speakers.

This notice and other information regarding the conference has been posted on the NSERC/Petro-Canada Chair for Women in Science and Engineering web site at <http://www.mun.ca/cwse>.

Another Member for the DAWEG Executive Committee?

Exec Committee members Diana Cheng and Saman Vazinkhoo were mysteriously absent at last February's exec meeting. As it turns out, they were dealing with a project scheduling issue. On the morning of February 5 – a month early – they welcomed their first child, tiny 6 lb (2.7 kg for those purists) daughter Nasseem! Congratulations Diana and Saman!!

Parental Leave Policy: A Perspective

Elizabeth Croft, DAWEG Co-chair

Policies. They are great if you are an entity. After you have a policy, you don't need a reason, you just have a policy.

The current APEGBC Fee Reduction Policy of the Association restricts members from obtaining parental leave status for more than three consecutive years. This policy has been rigidly adhered to and several members have been denied a fourth year. The reason given: this is our policy.

The decision to take parental leave, and the amount of time taken on parental leave, is extremely personal. It depends on the children's needs, family finances, job opportunities and a whole host of cultural, religious and other factors that cannot be ignored. The idea that there could be a cut and dried answer like "3 years" amazes me.

Government policy, at least, is more progressive. In calculated pension income, for example, a person who contributed to the CPP is not penalized for time during which they were the primary caregiver for pre-school children or special needs dependants (during which earnings are low, or non-existent).

So what is the deal with 3 years? If a person

would like to get around the 3 year limit, they can take parental leave for 3 years, go back to work for 1 year (i.e., this means pay full fees to the association) and then go back on parental leave for another 3 years. (Verbally, the association claims that this approach is not allowed. However, their policy does not indicate whether this is truly the case or not. If it is, then it seems that the association policy is that engineers should have a maximum of 3 children.) While this might work for some people, not all of us are so lucky as to be able to do our family/career planning in sync with APEGBC policy. The policy seems to indicate that the appropriate birth rate is about 1 child per every 4 years. I doubt Dr. Spock (not the green pointy eared guy, I mean Dr. Benjamin Spock) would agree.

Some have suggested that it is related to qualifications. That is, if you have been out of the loop, and looking after children for more than three years, then perhaps your skills are gone and your brain turns to pabulum. However the policy does not state this. Nor does any other policy of the association support this notion. Its simply a matter of money. Once registered, if you can cough up your dues, and keep your nose clean, you can happily work in any engineering or non-engineering business sector, or not work at all, and still maintain your P.Eng status. I sincerely hope and expect that this will soon change. However, this notion of qualification should apply equally to all members regardless of their parental status.

Others have suggested that it is expensive to have reduced members for more than 3 years. My argument is a member is better than no member. Persons on parental leave are recognizably less able to pay membership fees that those who are fully employed. If the associate wants to cut off their magazine subscription, or ask them to pay extra for it, this would be understandable, since they are paying lower fees. However, apart from

receiving innovation, the association offers them no extra services except to keep their name on the

Parental Leave Policy:

A Perspective

(continued)

registration list. The marginal cost of keeping these members is negligible. The cost of losing these members, who could reasonably be expected to pay fees and participate in the association for a great number of years, after their parental leave is over, could comparatively quite high.

My \$0.02. The DAWEG exec would love to know what you think. Email us: daweg@mech.ubc.ca with your views on the Associations' parental leave policy.

PS: Much credit for this article should go to Gloria Coombs-Edie. I just did the paraphrasing. EC

WE HAD SUN AND WE HAD FUN. WHAT A RUN!

by Nicole Kohnert

*Coordinator, Engineering Feets
Fun Run/Walk '99*

About 80 runners and walkers gathered in the early hours of February 28 to participate in the 1999 Engineering Feets Fun Run/Walk at Stanley Park. This annual event started National Engineering Week in Vancouver with a swoosh of cool Seawall air. By all accounts the Run/Walk was a great success, thanks to the energetic participants, the sponsors, the volunteers, and of course, the sun.

The Division for the Advancement of Women in Engineering and Geoscience (DAWEG) would like to thank our generous and dedicated sponsors of this event:

APEGBC
Kvaerner Chemetics Inc.
Canadian Springs Water Company
Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
Dayton & Knight Ltd.
Pace Technologies Inc.

Kerr Wood Leidal Associates Ltd.
Running Room
Keen Engineering Co. Ltd.
Shaflic Engineering Ltd.
Klohn-Crippen Consultants Ltd.
Universal Dynamics Ltd.

T-shirts were designed by Judy Baum and the Running Room with the above list of names emblazoned in a circular pattern on the back. Other very popular contributions to the event included cinnibons, fruit, wafers, juice, and coffee all laid out on time for the appetites of hungry and thirsty runners and walkers. Also, door prizes were generously donated by:

APEGBC
Running Room
Esthetics at Anchor Point
The Fish House in Stanley Park
Keen Engineering Co. Ltd.
Universal Dynamics Ltd.
Molson's
Vij's Restaurant.

It was really the more than 20 volunteers that helped make this event possible. With much patience and stamina they performed a myriad of diverse tasks. It's wonderful to see how all these people pull together so well every year to make this event happen.

DAWEG is tremendously grateful for everyone's continued support in helping us promote the engineering and geoscience profession, develop and implement programs to attract young girls and women to engineering and geoscience, provide networking and mentoring to women in the profession, and in helping us advocate suitable workplace conditions and career development for women in the profession.

Congratulations to the female and male winners of the 10 km run: Jennifer Sheel (38.32 min) and Roy Osmond (37.42 min) and the 5 km walk: Jonathan Gardner. We hope to see you all at next year's event for some more fun in the sun!



May 20, 1999

Lucienne Robillard
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Government of Canada
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, ON CANADA K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Robillard:

OPEN LETTER IN STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE LIVE IN CAREGIVER PROGRAM

We are writing to you as the executive of the Division for Advancement of Women in Engineering and Geoscience, of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia. We would like to register our strong support for the continuation of the LIVE IN CAREGIVER PROGRAM.

Without the knowledge that their children are well cared-for in their homes while they work long hours and must travel, parents in professional careers cannot function in their jobs. Quality childcare outside the home is often difficult or impossible to obtain given these constraints, especially if overnight or early morning/late evening care is required. The same issue occurs again, when considering the care of elderly parents, or other dependants.

In our experience, the men and women that who employ live-in caregivers, some of them single parents, treat their employees very well, and assist them in upgrading their employment skills, and finding them employment after they leave their original job.

The playing field in non-traditional workplaces is already very uneven. Especially for women who provide the bulk of care for both young children and elderly parents. Please do not force women to choose between having a family, and having a professional career. It is NOT a fair choice. Removing this program would be the last straw that would have many professional women throwing up their hands and saying "I QUIT!".

In summary, the LIVE IN CAREGIVER PROGRAM is essential to many professional men and women with young children. It is also beneficial in bringing in immigrants who start off their lives in Canada in a home with a guaranteed job as well as support and care from their employer.

We strongly object to any move to scrap this program.

Sincerely,

The Executive Committee of the Division for Advancement of Engineering and Geoscience,
Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia

cc: Hedy Fry, Secretary of State for Women