

=====
Newsletter Editor: Naira Hovakimyan (naira.hovakimyan@ae.gatech.edu)
Chair of WiC: Anna-Maria Perdon (perdon@popcsi.unian.it)
Database Coordinator: Dawn Roberson (robersondj@ieee.org)
Mailing List Coordinator: Dawn Tilbury (tilbury@umich.edu)
Advisors: Bozena Pasik-Duncan (bozena@math.ukans.edu)
Cheryl Schrader (schrader@utsa.edu), Fahmida Chowdhury (fnchowdh@louisiana.edu)
Web Page: <http://voyager1.utsa.edu/~schrader/women-in-control/>

Disclaimer: The newsletter will be posted on the web. Any material that people do not wish to appear on the web will be removed upon request.

In this Issue, #1, 2002:

1. Editor's Note
2. Message from WiC Chair Anna-Maria Perdon
3. Postdoctoral Researcher Position in Cooperative Control
4. ACC02 luncheon, contributed by IEEE Secretary-Administrator Linda Bushnell
5. Eckman Award talk by Dawn Tilbury at the ACC'02
6. Roommate coordination and Student travel grants for ACC02, contributed by May-Win Thein
7. A letter from Milan, contributed by Dawn Tilbury

1. Editor's Note

Dear colleagues,

This newsletter summarizes the 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:

Naira Hovakimyan
School of Aerospace Engineering
Georgia Institute of Technology
270 Ferst Drive, Atlanta, GA 30332-0150
e-mail: naira.hovakimyan@ae.gatech.edu
Phone: (404) 894 0657 office, Fax: (404) 894 2760

2. Message from WiC Chair Anna-Maria Perdon

Dear colleagues,

Although we are still a minority in the CSS, the visibility of women in the society has increased significantly during the last thirteen years due to the outstanding skills and the wonderful job done by Bozenna, Cheryl, Linda and all the others who are volunteering for the society in several important positions. This is why I believe that one of our primary concerns should be to encourage an increasing involvement, especially of young researchers, in the WiC and CSS activities.

The Women in Control group is a great forum in which we can help each other in many different ways women to reach the higher ranks in the society and in the scientific and professional community. To this aim we must make any effort to retain and upgrade the membership, to increase the number of women CSS members from non-US countries, to integrate more and more women members from all over the world into all the CSS activities. On this point we should think also about the possibility of some financial support for women of non-US countries willing to take part in the society activities but having not enough research money for travelling. We would like to count on Bozenna's support as the chair of the International Committee. (As a longer term program I would like also to find out if there is some European or NATO program on positive actions or similar to which we could apply for a Travel/Mentoring Program, similar to the one for the Association for Women in Mathematics Bozenna wrote about. If any of you can help me in this, please contact me.)

With the New year I have started thinking also about small, practical things I could do in order to realize our objectives. First of all, I found an enthusiastic help in Elena Zattoni, (<http://www.deis.unibo.it/Staff/Research/ElenaZattoni/ElenaZattoni.html>, ezattoni@deis.unibo.it) a young engineer from Bologna who accepted to collaborate with me, in particular in taking care of the WiC home page. We are now working to update and enhance the existing one, probably we'll also change a little bit the "formal appearance". We hope that at least a first version will soon be ready.

Unfortunately, I have still no news about the possibility of organizing a joint IEEE CSS-IFAC WiC luncheon in Barcelona during the XV IFAC World Congress. Indeed, I am in touch with the local organizers and hope to bring you up to date with positive news about this. Finally, I am pleased/glad to inform you about a very nice occasion we will have to spread the purposes of WiC within our country. In July, as usually, there will be a summer school in Bertinoro (near Bologna) for Italian PHD students in Control and System Theory. I'll be there with Elena, and we intend to organize a meeting (at lunch time as it has proved to be a successful choice) to explain to female attendants the benefit of joining the IEEE CSS society and the purpose of our group.

Looking forward to see you all in Anchorage, all the best

Annamaria

3. Postdoctoral Researcher Position in Cooperative Control of UAVs at The Ohio State University

A postdoctoral researcher position is open and available starting April 2002 within the newly established Collaborative Center of Control Science at The Ohio State University. One of the key focus areas of this research center is control of clusters of microsatellites and control of formations and groups of uninhabited air vehicles (UAVs). The

center will bring together control theory researchers from OSU to work closely with their counterparts at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

The postdoctoral researcher will be working collaboratively on the development of strategies for formation reconfiguration, stability and control of groups of UAVs under changes in the formation topology, reconfiguration under communication failures.

Topics include autonomous planning of feasible paths during reconfiguration maneuvers, obstacle detection and obstacle avoidance. The ideal candidate should have a strong background in one

or more of the following areas: hybrid system theory and control, optimization, feedback control theory

(specifically in nonlinear control or robust control).

Previous experience in UAV control is not necessary, but desirable.

Candidates for the position should contact Professor Andrea Serrani (serrani@ee.unian.it).

Additional information on the control group at The Ohio State University can be found at <http://eewww.eng.ohio-state.edu/~passino/CRL.html>

Information on the Collaborative Center of Control Science (CCCS) can be found at <http://eewww.eng.ohio-state.edu/%7Epassino/cccs.html>

Andrea Serrani
Dipartimento di Elettronica ed Automatica
Università di Ancona
Via Brezze Bianche
60131 Ancona, ITALY
phone: +39 071 2204468
email: serrani@ee.unian.it
URL: http://Ws1.system.ee.unian.it/Serrani_2.htm

=====
4. ACC02 luncheon, contributed by IEEE Secretary-Administrator Linda Bushnell

WiC meeting will be Wednesday, May 8th, 12 - 1:30pm. Please watch out for the location on the board of ads.

=====
5. Eckman Award talk by Dawn Tilbury at the ACC'02

Dawn Tilbury will be giving the Eckman Award talk (a plenary on Thursday) at the ACC'02. The abstract is on the ACC'02 website

<http://www.ent.ohiou.edu/~acc2002/>

=====
6. Roommate coordination and Student travel grants for ACC02, contributed by May-Win Thein

May-Win Thein, the Vice Chair for Student Affairs on behalf of the Women in Control (WiC), will be organizing a Roommate Location Service for ACC 2002. If you would like to share a hotel room and need assistance finding a roommate, please subscribe to the Roommate Location Service at the appropriate web site below:

Male - <http://poincare.mae.okstate.edu/mailman/listinfo/acc02m>

Female - <http://poincare.mae.okstate.edu/mailman/listinfo/acc02f>

You will then be asked to post the following information:

- 1.Name
- 2.E-mail address and other contact information
- 3.Date arriving at the Conference hotel
- 4.Date checking out of the Conference hotel
- 5.Smoking preference
- 6.Any other information you wish to add

This information will be compiled into separate lists for male/female respondents and distributed by e-mail. You will be responsible for

contacting and screening prospective roommates from the appropriate list and making your own hotel reservations and arrangements.

Please note that this service is a resource to merely locate potential roommates, not to match specific individuals together. In so doing, neither the ACC 2002 Operating Committee nor WiC will be held responsible for any situations that arise as a result of room sharing between particular parties. In addition, this service will end after April 5. Therefore, interested individuals should subscribe and post the appropriate information well before this date.

The ACC 2002 Operating Committee would also like to thank the Program Chair for his help in establishing the Roommate Location Service subscription list server.

Student Travel Grants

The 2002 ACC is expecting to receive travel funds from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the American Automatic Control Council (AACC), and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Dynamic Systems and Control Division (DSCD) for students registered in US and Canadian universities to attend the conference. These funds will be used to partially defray the cost incurred by the student attendees presenting papers at the 2002 American Control Conference. Note that these Student Travel Grants will be in the form of reimbursements sent only after the completion of the conference and upon receipt of proof of conference attendance and expenditures. As such, students should plan and document their finances accordingly. The eligibility conditions for funding are as follows:

1. At the time of application, students must be enrolled at an institution of higher learning in the United States or Canada.
2. Students must be an author or co-author of a paper accepted for presentation at the 2002 ACC.
3. Students must present the paper at the 2002 American Control Conference.
4. For ASME DSCD funding, students must be members of ASME DSCD and attend the ASME DSCD Executive Committee Meeting at the ACC 2002.

To apply, please send the following information to the May-Win Thein (mthein@cisunix.unh.edu), Vice-Chair for Student Affairs.

1. Student's name (first name, middle initial, and last name)
2. Society Affiliation(s) and member number(s) (if any); note that students applying for the ASME DSCD Travel Grant must explicitly note this in their application, submit their ASME member number, and confirm their DSCD membership status

3. Institutional address

4. Phone/fax/e-mail

5. Advisor's name

6. Advisor's phone/fax/e-mail

7. Session identification and title of the paper

8. A budget for the amount of support requested; note that the actual support will depend on the number of applicants and funds available

9. A letter of justification from you for the request of financial support

10. A letter of certification and support from your academic advisor, stating that you are currently enrolled as a student and are planning to attend and present a paper at the ACC 2002

The deadline for applications is April 1, 2002.

7. A letter from Milan, contributed by Dawn Tilbury

It took me longer than expected to get settled in Italy. I figured I would just show up in Milan, open a bank account, find an apartment, and move in. Although Milan is the most expensive city in Italy and one of the most expensive in Europe, the US dollar is very strong and the cost of living is reasonable compared to Ann Arbor. How hard could it be?

Apartment hunting was a challenge, even compared to San Francisco and Manhattan. Although there were hundreds of ads listed in the newspaper, I soon discovered that most of them are placed by "information agencies" which charge a fee of up to \$200 to provide landlord phone numbers. Which could be reasonable, except that each agency had only two or three listings, and there was no guarantee that the apartments were still available. Even in such a big city, there aren't a lot of rental apartments -- many young Italians live with their families until they get married, and then buy an apartment. Most people I talked to had found an apartment through a friend of a friend. I ended up staying with a colleague's parents while I was apartment hunting. It turned out that his mother's friend had a niece with an apartment to rent, and I could move in the following week. A true Italian connection.

On the other hand, if I had found an apartment right away, I don't know how I would have paid for it. I didn't bring very much money with me, figuring that I would just open a bank account in Italy and transfer the money from my account in Michigan. This is the 21st century after all, how hard could it be? I tried to open a bank account on a Monday, my first full day in Italy. First, the bank wanted a "codice fiscale", similar to a social

security number, but I had one of those from when I gave a seminar in Pisa years ago and got an honorarium. But then I also needed a "permesso di soggiorno" (permit to stay). I didn't know about this, an American doesn't need a visa to come to Italy. So, Tuesday, I went to the American consulate to find out. They told me that without a visa, I could only stay in Italy 90 days. But, I could get a temporary permit at the police station. We called the police station, learned what I needed to bring to get the permit, but they are only open in the mornings and are closed on Wednesdays. Thursday morning I spent an hour and a half in line (together with a very helpful administrative assistant from the lab who served as an interpreter) just to get the required form and to learn that I only had enough documentation for a 1-month permit. To get a 3-month permit, I would also need to show proof of sufficient funds to live in Italy, proof of private health insurance, etc. That afternoon, I called my bank and HMO in Michigan and had them fax several documents over to me, and Friday morning waited in line another hour and a half and got a 3-month permit to stay. Then on Friday afternoon I opened a bank account. Once I had the bank account number, I faxed my bank in Michigan to send some money over. It took another two weeks to arrive, but finally, I was solvent.

I was frustrated that it took me a whole week to open a bank account and almost two weeks to get an apartment, but most people I have talked to here (both Italians and foreigners) are impressed that I got everything done so quickly! As confusing as the system here seems to me, it is equally confusing to the Italians. Everybody has been very friendly and tries to help as much as they can. Nobody knows how the system works, but somehow, it does. You just have to ask a lot of questions and be persistent.

Once I got settled with a place to live, I started to get settled in at work. I am working at an Italian national research lab called ITIA, which translates as Institute for Industrial Technologies and Automation. The lab is located near the Politecnico di Milano, but is not directly affiliated with the university. I am working on a research project to develop new control strategies for manufacturing systems. It's very similar to the research I was doing in Michigan, except here in Italy, the machines make shoes instead of cars.

I don't have an office at work, instead there is an "open space" (that's the Italian term for it) with about 20 computers. There are a lot of windows and it's quite a pleasant place to work. We all go to lunch together, to the Mensa. It's like a company cafeteria but the lunches are subsidized. It's Italian food every day, but I'm not complaining -- even the cafeteria food here is good.

The big news here at New Year's, of course, was the new euros. The transition has been very smooth, although it's taking awhile for everybody to adjust. It's a big conversion to make -- one euro is almost 2000 lire.

The prices seem really cheap at first -- "only 5 euros", but in fact, almost 10,000 lire! Another problem is that the Italians are not used to dealing with coins. The smallest bill used to be 1000 lire (about 50 cents), and now is 5 euros (almost \$5). An order of magnitude difference in the smallest bill size means lots of change in your pocket.

There has been a big publicity campaign and media vigilance against businesses taking advantage of the money change to raise prices. Most prices in lire, however, were usually rounded to the nearest 1000 or

possibly 500. There hasn't been much evidence of price hikes -- which means that prices like 2000 lire are now 1.03 euros, and so there's more change to deal with because of the decimal points, not to mention trying to add up things in your head (every newspaper stand now has a calculator handy). The government, on the other hand, has raised some prices drastically. For example, a subway ticket in Milan was 1500 lire (0.77 euros) and is now 1 euro, a 30% hike! Also, some things are slow to be converted to euros. For example, the vending machines at work still only take lire (bills or coins). I spent all of my lire, and now can't buy a cup of coffee in the afternoon.

Milan is a big city; it's a bit like Detroit in that it is located in the heart of most of Italy's manufacturing, and it's also a bit like New York in that the Italian stock market and fashion capital are here. The air is quite polluted and smoggy. There is a drought here in Italy now which hasn't helped the air quality. To help alleviate the problem, the last two weekends have had an "Eco-friendly Sunday," no private cars are allowed on the streets from 8am to 8pm, in the entire city of Milan and surrounding suburbs. During the week they are now alternating: only cars with even-numbered plates can come into Milan today, and tomorrow cars with odd-numbered plates can come. There's rain in the forecast, which should help the situation.

Overall, I am enjoying my experience here in Milan. I've found some interesting research problems to work on, have a good group of colleagues, some fun groups of friends, and the food is wonderful.