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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:

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2. Message from WiC Chair Anna-Maria Perdon

The IEEE CSS IFAC “Women in Control lunch” during the 15th IFAC World Congress in Barcelona. has been very successful! 30 people attended from 15 countries,

Argentina (1)

Belgium (2)

Denmark (1)

Estonia (1)

France (4)

Germany (2)

Hungary (1)

Israel (1)

Italy (6)

Mexico (1)

Spain (2)

South Africa (2)

Sweden (2)

UK (1)

USA (3)

Some of the colleagues (two from France and one from Mexico) were critical about a meeting “for women”, since apparently in their career they never had the feeling to be discriminated in any way. Bozenna invited everybody to have a positive attitude, not to criticize but to suggest something better.

From the discussion it was evident that many between us had in common a series of problems and situations: to be the only one or one of the very few women in the department, the difficulty in taking care of the family and of the job. Many of them said that they have no PHD female students and that still very few girls choose our field and, more generally, technological subjects in their studies. In fact this is becoming an issue both in the States and in Europe: to attract more women to sciences. I would like to know if some of you have personal experience on this, please tell me and give suggestions on what could be done to make more women interested in sciences and in particular in systems theory and control.

The main message is: become more visible, join the IEEE and the IFAC, be active and get involved. Only in this way an increasing number of women can reach a higher level in the “decision making” process so that our voice can contribute to make the academia and the society more friendly and the life less demanding for us and for our daughters.

I urge again WiC members to send in their IEEE Senior Membership applications (if eligible). The BoG has decided to make an extra effort to augment the number of senior members. All of you who could apply for senior membership, please do so. If you need recommendation letters, let us know. We must have the largest possible number of senior female members!!!!

3. Women awarded, contributed by Linda Bushnell

Please join me in congratulating Anna Maria Perdon and Francoise Lamnabhi-Lagarrigue for being elected to the IEEE Control Systems Society Board of Governors for a three-year term

starting January 1, 2003. There were 9 nominees (2 women and 7 men) and 6 winners. Anna Maria was an appointed member to the BoG in 2001 and Francoise is currently an appointed member.

4. Women in science, engineering, and mathematics: personal experience and objective perspective, contributed by Elena Zattoni

Last week, I was among the participants in the joint IEEE CSS/IFAC WiC luncheon which was held in Barcelona, on the occasion of the 15th IFAC Congress. Actually, it was the first time that I attended a meeting where only women were present to discuss their profession, their relationships with colleagues on one side - and families on the other. The whole discussion was focused on personal experience. I really appreciated this aspect, mainly because I could see it as the 'practical' counterpart of the contents of a book which I ran into some weeks ago and which I would like to suggest to anyone who has not yet read it (indeed it is not new) and who is seeking an objective perspective about the status of women in the sciences, mathematics and engineering. I was really impressed by "The equity equation", this is the title of the book (Jossey Bass Publisher, 1996), essentially because of the rigorous analysis of the factors influencing women's career attainments. It's my feeling that this analysis keeps its validity also after more than five years and also outside of the USA, but it could be nice to discuss these issues with other colleagues.

5. "Summer is over... Relax and Enjoy!", contributed by Bozenna Pasik-Duncan

Dear Friends,

It was so nice to see you in Europe this summer. I saw many of you in beautiful Barcelona at the IFAC meeting. Big thanks go to Anna Maria for organizing the lunch for CSS and IFAC female members. It was good to get together and to have the opportunity to meet more women. I recall when I attended my first IFAC (many years ago). I didn't know many people and my Polish fellows didn't travel too much at that time. This time the situation changed significantly. I know many people and Poles travel a lot. These days during every coffee break at conferences I enjoy talking to so many of you.

I also enjoy listening to you about your family matter as well. You impress me with how well you balance career and life.

This balancing career and life has been the biggest challenge for me and I have one child only. I learned that a few of you have 3 or 4 children. The challenge that you face in combining teaching, research, and service while also living a life beyond academia is incredible and I have to admit that I am grateful to you for sharing your stories.

Each time now when I think I have a lot to handle,

I think about those of you who have a large family and I say to myself, "If she can manage, so can I." It would be good to discuss time strategies used to balance multiple priorities and demands and to identify resources that can help with the juggling.

My university started this semester with the summit "Making Most of the

Times." It was a fascinating meeting in which hundreds of faculty discussed and shared their stories about career and life beyond work. I was leading the Breakout Session on "Teaching in International Culture." It was most interesting to see that most of the audience in my session were women. When I was preparing my speech for today, I couldn't stop thinking that teaching in international cultures is like being in a marriage of two different personalities. Either you will be angry and complain so much about your partner or you will try to learn as much as possible about your partner and teach your partner about yourself, how different you are, and then acceptance is the key to success.

To teach well in international cultures (in my case in the two totally different cultures of American and Polish) as James Dobson, president of the Focus on the Family, advises, "create the best marriage possible from the raw materials brought by two imperfect human beings with two distinctly unique personalities. But for all the rough edges that can never be smoothed and the faults that can never be eradicated, try to develop the best possible outlook and determine to accept reality exactly as it is.

The first principle of mental health is to accept that which cannot be changed. You could easily descend into depression over the circumstances in your life. But you can also choose to hang tough and be contented in spite of them. The operative word is "choose". A good marriage is not one where perfection reigns: It is a relationship where a healthy perspective overlooks a multitude of "unresolvables." I don't mean to imply that the advice I've given is easy to implement, but every human being eventually encounters difficult situations that are beyond his or her control. At that point, a person is either going to collapse, to run, to become angry, or do all three. I submit that acceptance is a better alternative."

Enjoy the new academic year and live beyond your work. Let us go through this new semester with the advice that works as a magic balm, "Relax and enjoy."

(I have just given this advice to my female colleague who just came to my office being very upset and emotional about our Ph.D student's recent unexpected performance, I said: " Relax and enjoy", she... smiled. I believe that it worked and I am glad that it did and I look forward having an excellent year and I wish you the same).

As always my very best wishes to you,

Bozenna

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