

the Beacon

*Happy Holidays!
Don't miss the
Fall Social*

The Newsletter of the Maine Section, IEEE www.ieee.org/maine

Dec '06
Volume 15
Number 2

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Chair's Column

by *Scott Dunning*, Section Chairman

Welcome to the 2006, paper-edition, of "The Beacon". As you know, we switched over to an all-electronic version in 2005. Our goal with this edition is to reach out to those of you that have not been receiving the electronic version. If this is the case with you, please take the time to fill out the survey in this issue so that we can get you in the database. Your information will not be distributed to any vendor and will only be used to send you information regarding IEEE Maine Section activities.

During the past year, we endured another "energy crisis". As an engineer involved in energy management, this was a good year for business. Unfortunately, after

spending the day helping companies save money, I came home to the same high energy bills as everyone else. I'd like to say that I use all the leading energy-saving technology in my home, but that wouldn't be true. So what changes have I made as a result of the energy crisis?

Scott's Top 10 Energy Savings Actions

1. I finally installed compact fluorescents in every location that made sense! By using the rebates available from Efficiency Maine, it really makes a lot of sense. Just make sure that you use quick starting ballasts or your spouse might veto your installation.

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Attention Section Members!

The usual distribution method for the Maine Section Beacon newsletter is via e-notice from IEEE headquarters. A few Beacons, such as this one, will be paper versions that will be mailed to all members. Some Section members wish to always receive paper Beacons and they are on a mailing list for this purpose. If you also wish to receive paper copies of all Beacons, and have not previously made this request, please complete and mail the following form to the address shown. (If you have previously filled out a similar form requesting paper copies of the Beacon, it is not necessary to complete the form again.)

Yes, I would like to receive paper copies of all the Beacons

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Mail to: Scott Dunning, 19 Frances Dr., Hampden, ME 04444

Chair's Column continued from page 1

2.I installed a heater to heat my outdoor pool. However, my spouse did not like its aesthetics on the South side of the house, so I was forced to install it on the Western side of my garage roof. As you guessed, it severely affected the energy savings. Chalk that one up to style over substance.

3.I finally cleaned the back of my refrigerator. The highest energy guzzler in most homes is the refrigerator. So, throw away that 20-year old refrigerator that you got from your relatives for free. The price may be right, but the long term cost is biting.

4.I stopped ironing my clothes. I remember Dick Hill running an experiment one time and he talked about the energy savings of not ironing along with the benefits associated with your clothes lasting longer. While this tidbit might work for a college professor used to the rumpled look, I don't recommend it to everyone.

5.I regularly turn off lights in rooms that aren't occupied. With three children in my house, this has turned into a full time job which involves a lot of hollering.

6.I installed weather stripping around my doors to cut down on cold air infiltration. On one of my doors the leaks were so bad that the average temperature on

my street dropped after the repair.

7.I got on a regular maintenance contract for my furnace. Everyone knows we should have our furnace cleaned at least annually but it is easy to forget if you aren't on a service contract.

8.I turn off computers and various toy chargers that are plugged in to the wall but not connected to anything. The power supplies are sources of stray power losses. Of course I had to seek support on this initiative from my children. (see item 5)

9. I installed a programmable thermostat. This allowed me to program it so that the house gets cold enough to keep the kids in their beds at night but warms up shortly before I have to wake up.

10. The final change.. tada.... I began regularly feeling guilty about driving a truck as my primary vehicle. I could have fixed this, but since I have three more years of payments to make until I catch up to the depreciation, I'm stuck.

Well, good luck keeping your energy costs low this winter! With the amount of investments people are currently making in 70s vintage technology developed during the last energy crisis, we will soon be making a dent in our energy consumption. That should coincide with OPEC reducing the costs so we can start the cycle again!

Notice of Intent to Elect IEEE Maine Section officers

In accordance with Article VI, Section D of the IEEE Maine Section Bylaws, notice is hereby given that an election of officers for the 2007 Section year will be held at a Section Meeting in Portland, ME on Friday, December 2, 2006 unless petitions are received as outlined below.

The slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee for the 2007 Section year (1/1/07-12/31/07) is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Chair: | John Roberts |
| Vice Chair: | Ali Abedi |
| Secretary: | Paul Villeneuve |
| Treasurer : | David E. Kotecki |
| Jr. Member-at-Large: | (open) |
| Previously Elected: | |
| Senior member-at-Large: | Richard Baker |
| Junior Past Chairman | Scott Dunning |
| Senior Past Chairman | Ian Goepfert |

From the Maine Section Bylaws:

Article VI

Section E Nominations for any or all offices may be made by petition under the following provisions:

1. Such petition or petitions shall bear the personal signature of a least 10 voting members of the Maine Section.
2. Such petition or petitions must be delivered to the Secretary not later than December 1.
3. The nominee or nominees covered by such petition or petitions shall be included in the regular ballot and designated as such.



IEEE Student Branch News

by John Merry, Chairman
UMaine Student Branch



I took over for Roger Blanchette as Chair of the UMaine IEEE Student Branch on September 1st. The officers include myself (EET), Treasurer Allen Small (EET), Secretary Nathan Bourgoïn (ECE), Vice Chair Jing Ling (ECE), and Fundraising Chair Curtis Merriman (EET). Professors David Kotecki (ECE) and Spider Williams (EET) are our faculty advisors. We hold IEEE Student Branch meetings every Monday at 5:15 pm in 113 Barrows. The Student Branch has promoted IEEE as an organization that includes not just ECE students, but EET's and other engineering and related majors as well. We increased EET membership drastically this April during our big recruitment push, and we now have much more interaction between EET and ECE students.

As you may have heard, we held an Engineering Job Fair at the MCA on October 19th in which 46 companies registered to talk to students about full time, co-op, and summer positions. Over 400 students participated in this event. This makes this Job Fair the largest Job Fair we've held in its 5-year history. We worked with the Career Center to coordinate this huge success and I have received a lot of positive feedback from faculty, students, and employers.

Another important item we have worked on this semester is the IEEE Coffee Shop. We turned the old ECE office room in 113 Barrows Hall into the new Coffee Shop and Student Study Lounge. Before we made this change, room was vacant and unwelcoming for a year. We held our IEEE Student Branch meetings in the room (and still do) but that is all the room was ever really used for. However, during this semester we turned the cluttered and dirty room into a clean and comfortable Student Study Lounge and Coffee Shop, which was a major improvement. Currently, we are able to provide a better variety of breakfast, snacks, and lunch items with much more space and increased

organization. Furthermore, we are working with Scott Dunning to present a proposal to the Maine Section of IEEE for several more improvements. We would like to add tables and chairs for studying, and we would like to get computers with internet access in the room. We are also looking to put a photocopier in the room for IEEE member use and continue to improve the services we offer to students.

In April of this year, we helped Professor Abedi coordinate the IEEE Region 1 Student Conference, which was held at the University of Maine for the first time. There was a Paper Contest as well as a MicroMouse Maze competition. More than a dozen Universities and Colleges participated. We helped coordinate the purchase and construction of the maze, which we are now looking to ship to FDU, where the next conference will be held. This event was a great success for the University of Maine and IEEE.

Also in April, we were able to put \$1000 towards the UMaine IEEE Student Branch Scholarship. After the Maine section generously contributed \$500 toward the scholarship, the Student branch matched that donation with another \$500. We want to thank the Maine Section for their contribution to our scholarship. Currently, the principal of the scholarship is \$3000 and the market value is \$3253. Our goal is to reach a principal of \$10,000, so the scholarship will generate \$500 in yearly interest. An award of \$500 is given out each spring to a full-time undergraduate student who has been both active in the student branch of the IEEE and has exhibited exceptional academic merit as decided by a scholarship committee. The scholarship committee is chosen each year by the IEEE Student Branch faculty advisor(s). Allen Small was the recipient of this scholarship for 2005-2006.

IEEE Maine Section Web Site Updated

Section member Bruce Jagolinzer has completely updated the Maine Section web site to reflect the latest information regarding Section and Chapter officers and events. Check it out at:

http://www.ewh.ieee.org/r1/maine/me_ieee.html

http://www.ewh.ieee.org/r1/maine/me_events.html

Thanks Bruce, for your great effort!

New Senior Member

The following Maine Section member is our latest Senior Member:

James Olson

Congratulations!

Reports, Studies Shatter Myth that H-1B Visa Holders are Paid Same Wages as U.S. Citizens

WASHINGTON (6 September 2006) -- U.S. industry spokespeople say repeatedly that H-1B visa holders are paid the same wages as similarly qualified American citizens. Numerous studies and reports, however, have found this to be untrue.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Vice President Phiroz Vandrevalla even admitted that his company enjoys a competitive advantage because of its extensive use of foreign workers in the United States on H-1B and L-1 visas.

“Our wage per employee is 20-25% lesser than US wage for a similar employee,” Vandrevalla said. “Typically, for a TCS employee with five years experience, the annual cost to the company is \$60,000-70,000, while a local American employee might cost \$80,000-100,000. This (labour arbitrage) is a fact of doing work onsite. It’s a fact that Indian IT companies have an advantage here and there’s nothing wrong in that. ... The issue is that of getting workers in the US on wages far lower than local wage rate.” (“US visas are not a TCS-specific issue,” *Businessworld (India) magazine*, June 2003)

Findings showing H-1B holders earning less than the market wages paid to U.S. technology workers include:

1) “Immigrant engineers with H-1B visas may be earning up to 23 percent less on average than American engineers with similar jobs, according to documents filed with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Salary data from Labor Condition Applications (LCAs) lends credence to arguments that lower compensation paid to H-1B workers suppresses the wages of other electronics professionals.” -- *EE Times* (June 2006), which calculated average H-1B salaries from LCAs and compared them to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Employment Statistics survey of employers. See <http://www.eetimes.com/news/latest/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=189401976>.

2) “In spite of the requirement that H-1B workers be paid the prevailing wage, H-1B workers earn significantly less than their American counterparts. On average, applications for H-1B workers in computer occupations were for wages \$13,000 less than Americans in the same occupation and state.”

3) “Some [H-1B] employers said that they hired H-1B workers in part because these workers would often

accept lower salaries than similarly qualified U.S. workers; however, these employers said they never paid H-1B workers less than the required wage.” Government Accountability Office report (September 2003).

According to IEEE-USA Vice President Ron Hira, the concept of “prevailing wages” is worthless as a safeguard for U.S. and H-1B workers.

“Proponents of the H-1B program say that by law H-1B workers must receive prevailing wages, but this is a legal façade so full of loopholes that it is frequently gamed by employers to pay below-market wages,” Hira said. “This is another myth of the H-1B program, that prevailing wages are the same as market wages.”

A review of the DOL’s LCA database for FY 2005 shows some of the well-below-market wages employers have been certified to pay H-1B workers. For example, Teja Technologies received permission to pay a software engineer \$10,900. Infosys Technologies was authorized to pay a programmer analyst \$20,030. TCS was certified to pay a computer programmer \$20,571, and Syntel, Inc., was permitted to pay a computer programmer \$31,304.

Under law, U.S. employers have three options for determining an H-1B employee’s prevailing wage. According to the DOL, an employer can request a “prevailing wage determination from the appropriate State Workforce Agency;” use a “survey conducted by an independent authoritative source;” or use “another legitimate source of information.”

Despite the law’s intent, Hira enumerated a few ways companies circumvent the law’s prevailing wage requirements when hiring H-1B workers:

- 1) By selecting a survey source with the lowest salaries
- 2) By misclassifying an experienced worker as entry level
- 3) By giving the person a lower-paying job title than one reflective of the work to be performed
- 4) By citing wages for a low-cost area of the country, then sending an employee to a higher-cost area

NEWS from IEEE-USA

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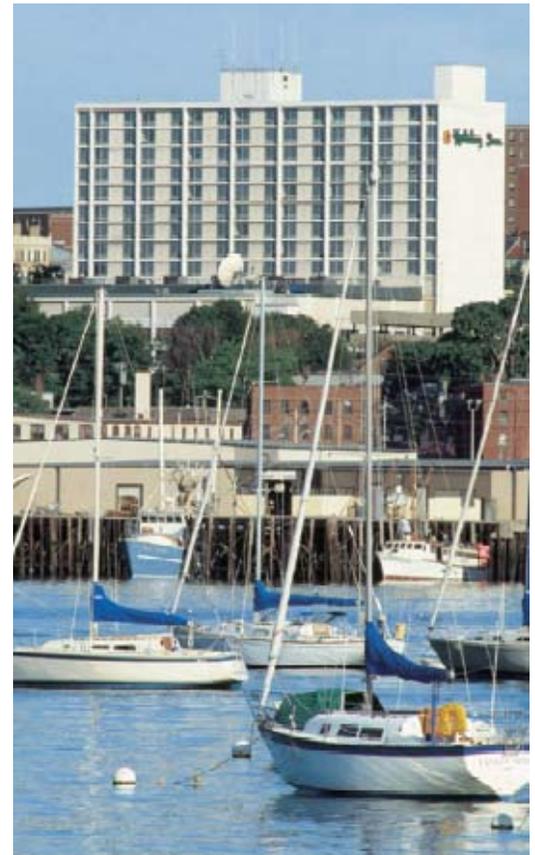
MAINE IEEE SECTION FALL OUTING – DECEMBER 2nd

Dinner and the Pirates

The Maine IEEE section will be holding a Fall Outing on Saturday, December 2nd. This outing is a great opportunity for members to get more acquainted with each-other and make further industry contacts. This event is open to all members and their families/friends. The outing will begin with a social hour at 4:00 PM at the Holiday Inn by the Bay (more information available at www.innbythebay.com). The social hour will be followed by dinner at 5:00 with the following as entrée options:

- Choice 1: 10 oz. Roast Prime Rib of Beef Au Jus, Caesar Salad and Baked Potato with Sour Cream and Chives
- Choice 2: Maple Marinated Pork Tenderloin Topped with Caramelized Apples and Onions, Tossed Mixed Greens with Choice of Dressing, and Pars lied Boiled Potatoes
- Choice 3: Baked Crabmeat Stuffed Haddock with Tarragon Sauce, Mixed Baby Greens, and Roasted Parsley Potatoes.

All choices include Chef's Seasonal Vegetable, Home baked Wheat and French Rolls and Butter with Dessert and Beverage.



Dinner will be followed by an action packed Portland Pirates hockey game, last year's Atlantic Division Champions. The game begins at 7:05 PM at the Cumberland County Civic Center conveniently located just across the street. This fall outing will be a great chance to relax, enjoy the evening and catch up with old friends and make new ones.

The price for both events is \$35 per person or \$10 for Portland Pirate tickets only. **A final dinner count is required by November 27th**. Please RSVP with John Roberts (e-mail john.roberts@biw.com or phone (207)380-6880) as soon as possible and include your dinner choice and number of attendees. See you on the 2nd!

Directions to Holiday Inn by the Bay:

From the South:

Take I-95 to Exit 44 (formerly Exit 6a). Continue on I-295 to Exit 7, (Franklin Street). Stay on Franklin Street for five (5) lights. Take a right onto Middle Street, travel approximately 1 mile. (Middle Street turns into Spring Street.) Holiday Inn is on the left.

From the North:

Take the I-295 Exit 7 (Franklin Street) and follow the Franklin Street directions above.

Beacon Publishing

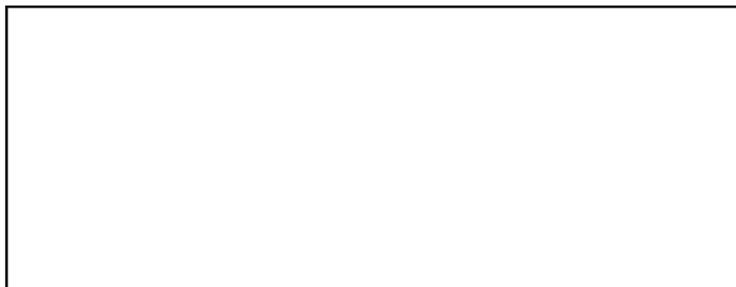
The Beacon is published on a monthly schedule based upon the need to advertise upcoming meetings. All material submitted for the Beacon must be received by the editor no later than the 15th of the month preceding the issue in which it should be included. Sorry, NO EXCEPTIONS!!

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