

The Beacon

Spring is Near!

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

Chairman's Message National Engineers' Week (E-Week)

by Brian Conroy, Chair

As you probably know, National Engineers' Week is planned for February 18-24, 2001. National Engineers' Week is designed to increase public awareness and appreciation of the positive contributions engineers make to the quality of life. We celebrate the week with the slogan, "Turning ideas into reality."

This year, E-Week will celebrate its 50th anniversary by launching two new programs geared to increasing the number of women engineers and helping vacationers find little-known engineering wonders. To help increase the number of women engineers, the first "Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day" legacy project is set for 22 Feb. Current women engineers -- which make up nine percent of the engineering profession -- are encouraged to serve as mentors and role models.

Also debuting during E-Week is "A Sightseer's Guide to Engineering." This Web-based travel guide will help vacationers incorporate well- and little-known U.S. engineering wonders into their itineraries. Members are encouraged to submit sites to www.eweek.org/nspe/engineeringsights/ for

consideration, particularly those with which visitors can interact.

To encourage the next generation of engineers, the Future City Competition National Finals will be held 20-21 Feb. in Washington, D.C. The event brings together 21 of the 26 regional-winning teams of 7th and 8th graders who created their own vision of a city of tomorrow, working first on computer and then constructing three-dimensional scale models. More than 30,000 students are expected to participate.

Here in Maine, we're celebrating National Engineers Week on March 3 with a day-long celebration at Central Maine Vocational College in Auburn. The theme for the day is "All Kids are Engineers" and there will be workshops and activities going on from 10 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The day will culminate with a banquet dinner and talk by David Patch of the Autonomous Undersea Systems Institute. Please consider attending this enjoyable and informative event, - you'll be glad you did.

March '01
Volume 10
Number 4

In This Issue

Chairman's Message

Senior Member
Benefits

Continuing Education
and Professional
Development

Annual Meeting

John Andrews is
Honored

Joint PES/IAS and
PMI Meeting: *The
Practical Applications of
Project Cost and Risk
Management in EPC*
(4/11/01)

The IEEE Group
Insurance Plan in
Maine

Senior Member Benefits

Editor's note: This announcement is being repeated because no Maine Section member was granted Senior Member grade during the last elevation on January 20, 2001. Don't pass up a chance to get some deserved recognition. Apply now for Senior Member grade!

Have you been an electrical engineer for at least 10 years? Then why not apply for Senior Member status in the IEEE and get some well deserved recognition for your accomplishments? The senior member grade is the IEEE's distinguished title for professional technical excellence bestowed by your professional peers. Being a senior member also can be a plus when interviewing for a position, seeking a promotion or requesting conference travel.

Each newly-elected senior member now receives an engraved IEEE senior member plaque made of wood and bronze (a \$25 value) that any member would be proud to display. Application and nomination forms can be accessed online at: www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/smforms.htm.

Senior membership is good for the profession, it's good for the IEEE and it's good for YOU!

Continuing Education and Professional Development

by Brenton Hill, Education Chair

b.r.hill@ieee.org

Continuing education and professional development are at the heart of IEEE's mission. On the local level, the Maine IEEE Executive Committee encourages such development through support of a broad range of programs. These programs depend on the enthusiasm of our active Maine membership.

In December I attended a seminar on electromagnetic transient analysis for power systems. It was put together by Paul Lerley of the Maine Power Engineering Society / Industrial Applications Society. We had eight hours of class work over two days in Portland. We received instruction and a CD with state of the art software developed by the Bonneville Power Administration with our Federal tax dollars. The ATP software provided was a good PC based graphical update of the powerful EMTP mainframe batchoriented software. The seminar was well attended, drawing people from all over New England. The participants were enthusiastic and grateful for the session. Thank you Paul!

This program is a good example of specific membership needs Maine IEEE can meet. Please let us know if you have some ideas for other programs. Our contact lists and current activities are at our web site <http://www.ieee.org/maine>.

On a closely related subject, about 30% - 40% of Maine IEEE members are or may want to be Registered Professional Engineers. Registered PEs in Maine have received the Maine PE Board's fall 2000 newsletter containing a proposal for recognition of each licensed PE's continuing education and professional development activities. The recognition takes the form of publication in the annual roster of registered engineers and is voluntary. No implementation time frame was given in the newsletter, but I have discussed the proposal with Board members and a fall 2001 startup implemented through Board rulemaking is most likely.

The activities include college courses, teaching (for non-faculty), publishing papers, participation in a professional society, patents and to a lesser extent, active practice, seminars and presentations at conferences. An average of fifteen Professional Development Hours (PDH) contact hours per year is needed and each PE applying for recognition would submit their documentation with their two year license renewal. The Board had for several years considered mandatory requirements so this is a significant change.

The National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors is the organization which creates the standardized PE test administered by the Maine Board for licensing. It also promotes "continuing professional competency guidelines... for consistency in those jurisdictions that adopt mandatory requirements or for those jurisdictions that wish to promote voluntary usage." The Maine Board has closely followed their national standard. NCEES guidelines can be found on the web (<http://www.ncees.org/engineers/cpc.html>) and includes the credit breakdown on Professional Development Hours by activity. Some states have adopted them as a mandatory requirement for PE license renewal.

My personal take is that I have to keep myself educated. This is a fast changing world and I work in one of the fastest changing fields. Whether I am a PE or not I am responsible for keeping up. Under the Maine Board's guidelines I am close to having 15 PDH contact hours for the year 2000; 8 for the seminar in December, 2 for being in active practice and 2 for being active in IEEE. Probably if I check back over my calendar I can find a few more credits. That was not too much effort to keep current. A college semester hour would count for 45 PDH, 15 of which could be carried forward to a future year. The credits may just be enough to kickstart me into taking an occasional good course.

The Maine PE Board's guidelines are a good starting point for evaluating your personal continuing educational and professional development needs. I recommend it to all IEEE members. Look at the web site. Think about the numbers. Think about where you are, where your field is going and what you have to do to keep your edge. The conclusions may surprise you.

ExCom Meeting Announcement

The Maine Section Executive Committee will be meeting on Monday, March 5, 2001 at Central Maine Power's NASC facility in Augusta, ME. The meeting begins at 5:30 PM. Free pizza dinner. **Visitors are welcome!** Please contact Brian Conroy at brian.conroy@cmpco.com or (207) 791-1023 for detailed directions.

Maine Section Annual Meeting May, 2001

The planning committee for the Annual Meeting can now provide the following information. (Please visit the Section website at: www.ieee.org/maine for the latest information on the Annual Meeting or other meetings.)

When: Friday, May 18, 1 PM

Where: The Black Bear Inn, Orono, ME

Activities: Advanced Engineering Wood Composite Center Tour, UM Planetarium Show at the Jordan Planetarium, UM Buffet Dinner at the Black bear Inn

Speakers:

Gill Pratt, MIT Legged Locomotion Laboratory
Steven Walk, MMA Center for Technology Forecasting
George Markowski, Trefoil Inc., Developing a Software Business in Maine

Cost: The price is \$30 per person, and should be paid the day of the event. The planetarium show is an additional \$4 per adult, or \$3 for students or those under age 18. If you would like to make hotel reservations, please call the Black Bear Inn directly at (207) 866-7120.

To Reserve: Please return the reservation form below by **May 1st** to the following address:

Valeria Bernier
18 Park Way
Bowdoin, ME 04287

Registration Form Maine Annual Meeting May 18, 2001

Name: _____

Address: _____

City and Zip: _____

Hphone: _____ Bphone: _____

Number of Banquet tickets: _____

Number of planetarium tickets:

adults: _____

students/under 18: _____

Long-time IEEE Volunteer John Andrews is Honored

On February 20, Maine Section Chairman Brian Conroy surprised John Andrews by presenting him with an IEEE clock plaque to honor him for his many years of volunteer service to the Maine Section. John was attending a meeting of the Eastern Trail Alliance when the surprise presentation occurred. John remarked later, "I was amazed and shocked when you presented me with an absolutely beautiful IEEE clock plaque." And he added, "Nothing made more difference in my career than serving as an IEEE volunteer. It was fun. I learned amazing things I met some wonderful engineers. I don't look back, but look forward. I have a trail or two to open"

John Andrews retired as a long time section volunteer at the end of this past year. The Section simply could not let him go without some recognition, however inadequate, for all his years of service to Maine IEEE members. John founded the Maine Chapter of the Computer Society and served as its Chairman and Treasurer. He also served as Chairman of the Maine Section. John was always known for his abilities to stir up enthusiasm among IEEE members and to recruit good volunteers. In short, he was always an outstanding leader in the Section no matter what his "official" position. Perhaps one of John's most enduring legacies to the Maine Section was his creation of the annual Magic of Christmas Social. This is an event that many members look forward to every year.

Even though John has retired from IEEE work, he certainly remains an effective worker for local causes. He is presently working hard as a volunteer for the Eastern Trail Alliance (ETA) to open a mostly off-road 55-mile recreational trail connecting Kittery with Bug Light Park on Casco Bay in South Portland. It is no surprise that John is President of ETA.

The proposed Eastern Trail would follow the corridor of the first railroad into Maine. The Eastern Line was shutdown right after World War II, before the Maine Turnpike was built. On February 21, 2001 Governor Angus King announced that \$850,000 in federal funds and \$250,000 in state bonds were being designated to start trail construction. John says that he is amazed at the support from the 12 municipal governments, the National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program, the Maine Department of Transportation and many others.

John invites interested Maine IEEE members to join the Eastern Trail Alliance (ETA). See www.EasternTrail.org to download an application. He tells us that there are many years to go before the trail is open. The ETA needs support to promote the dream.

Joint IEEE PES/IAS and PMI Meeting
The Practical Applications of Project Cost
and Risk Management in EPC

Mr. Ken Rogers, AEP Pro Serv Northeast

Plus: Bath Iron Works Tour

Wednesday, April 11, 2001

GENERAL

Make your reservations early for what promises to be an exciting plant tour and dinner meeting centered around the theme of practical project management in the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) phases of large projects. Mr. Ken Rogers, Vice President and Regional Manager of AEP Pro Serv Northeast, has 25 years experience in engineering and construction of power facilities. His experience has covered projects from natural gas fired combined cycle plants to wood fired and garbage waste-to-energy facilities.

This will be the first combined meeting of the Maine IEEE Power Engineering and Industrial Applications Societies with the Maine Chapter of the Project Management Institute. Project management is an essential ingredient of any career in the field of Engineering, and PMI has been active in promoting Total Quality Management principles and assisting the engineering professional in effective project management. PMI has recently published A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) which provides a basic reference for anyone interested in the profession of project management.

MEETING AGENDA

3:45 PM Arrive at BIW Training Facility
4:00 PM Orientation and Safety Equip.
4:15 PM Begin BIW Tour
5:30 PM Complete BIW Tour
6:00 PM Arrive at Taste of Maine
6:30 PM Dinner: "Captain's Buffet"
7:30 PM Program: Mr. Ken Rogers
8:30 PM End

BIW TOUR

The plan at this point is to tour part of the Bath Iron Works production facilities, plus have a "walk-by" of the new Land Level Facility. The emphasis during the tour will be on how the current transition at BIW will make them more efficient and reduce cost. Risk will also be addressed in terms of what happens to profitability if improvement goals are not met.

It is recommended that tour participants wear appropriate clothing and shoes. We will meet at the training facility just outside the main plant for a little orientation and to provide safety equipment as necessary.

DIRECTIONS to BIW:

From Rt. 1 North coming out of Brunswick, take the exit marked "Historic Bath", just before you get to the elevated ramp for the new bridge. The exit is a few blocks after the Holiday Inn. Go down the hill to the first traffic light (Washington St.), go left at light onto Washington St. to next traffic light (about one block - Centre St.), go left at traffic light onto Centre St., the Conley is the first building on the left, across from Burgess Computer. Park in the building lot.

From Rt. 1 South coming out of Woolwich, take the right lane of the new bridge and take the Bath exit as you come off the bridge. Go down the hill to the first traffic light (Washington St.), go right at the light onto Washington St. to the next traffic light (about one block - Centre St.), go left at traffic light onto Centre St., the Conley is the first building on the left, across from Burgess Computer. Park in the building lot.

TASTE of MAINE DINNER MENU

The "Captain's Buffet"
Baked Stuffed Filet of Sole w/ Sauce
Prime Rib
Italian Stuffed Shells
Chicken Divan
Parsley or Mashed Potatoes
Chef's Vegetable
Garden Salad
Fresh Fruit Bowl
Rolls & Butter
Dessert
Coffee or Tea

R.S.V.P.

Meeting Cost is \$25 all-inclusive.
Make reservations to Curt Beveridge by email: curtis.beveridge@cmpco.com or telephone (207) 623-3521, extension 2118.

We must have your reservations early (no later than April 4th) in order to guarantee the meal count to The Taste of Maine. No shows will be invoiced if cancellations are not made by April 3rd. Please indicate whether you are planning to attend the BIW tour. Checks can be made out to IEEE.

The IEEE Group Insurance Plan in Maine

by Daniel Martin

For a self-employed professional or an engineer who works for a small out-of-state company, finding affordable health insurance can be a difficult challenge. Professional societies often provide a group insurance plan as a significant benefit to their members – and until a few years ago, the IEEE provided a comprehensive health plan to its members in Maine.

The objective of this article is to discover the Maine Section's interest in the restoration of a group insurance plan for Maine IEEE members.

The Sad Tale in the State of Maine

While I was planning to return to Maine to live and work in 1998, I knew health insurance would be an issue for my family. At the time I was pleased to note that the IEEE offered a comprehensive health plan. The rates were higher but still competitive with the company plan I was on at the time. For 18 months, I was able to stay in my previous employer's health plan through the good graces of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987, also known as COBRA. When I next investigated the IEEE plan it had evaporated for those of us in Maine. Fortunately, the Maine State legislature had enacted a law that required HMOs licensed in Maine to also offer an "individual plan" to anyone in the state. This provided me the front row seat from which I viewed the train wreck of the Maine HMO and individual health plans.

For the next two years, the rates for the individual plan I was on went up by 60% to 70% each year. Each increase was approved by the state's Bureau of Insurance, as the insurance company could document that it actually cost that much to insure the members of the plan. It's been suggested to me (without proof) that the state law was part of the problem, since individual plan members can opt-in or out with few restrictions. I don't know if this was common practice, but paying for insurance only when you need it is certainly economical. Unfortunately, this practice is the consumer's answer to an insurance company that arranges only to insure healthy people who make no claims. Neither approach is sustainable – both schemes have a steady state with no members in the plan. It is also difficult to tell whether it is the consumer or the provider who is causing the demise of the health plan.

Also, I should mention that while the IEEE is not providing comprehensive health coverage in Maine, it appears that other professional societies are having the same trouble, with the same states, and perhaps with the same insurance providers. Just as an example, the American Society of Manufacturing Engineers offers medical coverage, but excludes 9 states.

The Story of IEEE and Health Insurance in Maine

Maine and eight other states including Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey and New York are currently

excluded from the comprehensive group health insurance that the IEEE offers as part of the Financial Advantage Program. Given the current status of individual health plans in Maine, the opportunity to join an association group plan would be a valuable benefit for independent consultants and self-employed IEEE members.

In order to determine why Maine is excluded from the IEEE group health plan, I've been in touch with a Member Benefits Administrator, IEEE FAP, and a Life and Health Actuary in the Maine Bureau of Insurance. At this point, the reason for the IEEE's exclusion of Maine is still not clear to me. At first, the IEEE told me that Maine does not allow health plans that include only association members and exclude other people in the state. The State of Maine asserts that Maine law does allow association group health plans.

As I mentioned above, Maine law requires certain licensed providers in Maine to provide an individual, non-group plan to any individual in the state who requests it. If this law applies to the IEEE plan, it is clearly an incentive for the IEEE underwriter to balk. I'm still trying to determine if this law is the cause for the IEEE insurance underwriter's exclusion of Maine.

What We Can Do

If the Maine IEEE membership considers a group health benefit important there are several ways we can pursue this further through the FAP and the IEEE leadership, and even the State of Maine. Frankly, I believe that the financial interests of the IEEE's underwriter in this matter will win out over any altruism on the part of the IEEE, but there are several approaches we can take to address the issue.

An option suggested to me by a representative of Maine Bureau of Insurance is for the Maine Section to organize its own association group plan for IEEE members in Maine. While worth considering if our membership is truly behind the idea, this is certainly an involved and time-consuming undertaking. Joe Kumiszczka of the Maine Software Developers Association (MESDA) is organizing such a plan for MESDA members (<http://www.mesda.com>.)

What You Can Do

If you are self employed in Maine and looking for health coverage, there are several ways for you to approach the problem. Ideally, you would like to be in a group plan, as opposed to the individual plan. If you qualify, you can join MESDA and take advantage of the plan they expect to put in place early this year. There are other state-oriented business association groups that you might contact. If a group plan is not an option, as was the case for me, then the individual plan is still available, though expensive. You can obtain information on all licensed health care providers from the Maine Bureau of Insurance website.

Finally, send me an email if you think health insurance is an issue that the Maine Section should get involved in. I'd also be interested in hearing from members who have professional experience or a background in health insurance or insurance regulation.

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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