

ensquire

Official Newsletter of the Engineering Undergraduate Student Society

[APEG industry night]



Students attending the APEG Student Industry Night in May 2002.

Brandon Ngai
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This May, the EUSS hosted our first Student Industry Night with the support of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists. It was a very successful event which saw a large turnout. Members of industry, including professional engineers and engineers-in-training, were present to mingle with engineering students in an informal atmosphere. Some engineers were SFU graduates as well, returning to enlighten this generation of students.

After some snacks, industry members were invited to speak to the group about their experiences thus far and their areas of work. Although most were employed in "regular" engineering jobs, some were consultants to other companies, while



Former EUSS executive Hiten Mistry with APEG Student Membership Coordinator Tracy Frazer.

others were sales engineers or management.

Attending the event were representatives from Bell West, Ciroid Networks, Creo, Duke Energy, Harbour Power Products, Nokia, PMC Sierra, Robert Freundlich &

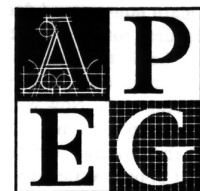
Ensquire
September 2002

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Associates, Sandwell Engineering, Spectrum, and West Bay.

For more information regarding APEGBC, please contact APEG Student Program Coordinator Shelley Lebar.



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[from the president]

Gregory Fung
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Hi everyone, this is your new EUSS President. Thanks for giving me this opportunity to lead your student society. I'm in 5th year in the systems option. Back when I had time and money I used to enjoy the beach, play basketball and watch movies. We can all remember...

This is a summer of great planning and anticipation, as our school is able to grow like never before. Surely you've read about the BC Government trying to "Double The Opportunity (DTO)" in Engineering. This will mean a larger program, with more students, more TAs, more space, and more faculty. The EUSS has been working hard to make sure the changes needed will work for all of us.

But of course, more people also means it's easier to run events. We will again start with a bang at First Week 2002. Midnight Madness will be bigger and better than ever this year, make sure you come out the first Friday night and meet the first years. This year's class of students should be even more fun than in the past.

But before the rain returns and summer ends, we've had lots of ways to get you outside and at least a bit tanned. As usual, Applied Science Volleyball was a blast; we also ran an exciting 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The pool league had another good semester of competitive fun. Thanks to Dave Ciampi, the man who throws the awesome BBQs. Finally, our first joint semester end dinner-social with Bio-chemistry worked out great; we

are glad to provide opportunities for you to meet interesting people from across campus!

We also had a great professional development event in May. Sponsored by APEGBC, engineers from many fields and companies came to SFU to talk to students about career development!

I hope you enjoyed this summer. Keep the momentum going and best of luck in attacking the fall semester! Don't hesitate to write us if you have any questions.

Gregory Fung
President, EUSS



[club spotlight]



Cyber Comp Union is the only computer club at Simon Fraser University. Our objective is to enhance the knowledge and interest of computers to all SFSS members and to provide assistance and workshops to interested students. In the past year, we had put our focus on providing workshops and assistance in the area of computer maintenance, homepage design, and computer usage. Check out our website at <http://www.sfu.ca/~ccu> for more information!



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[CEC 2002]

Eric Hennessey
eth@sfu.ca

The Canadian Engineering Competition (CEC) was held in Québec City from March 7-10 of this year, hosted by Université Laval. An expansive delegation of two (Greg Fung and myself) constituted SFU's representation after tough competition at the qualifier pared down our numbers. Silver and gold medalists of each regional competition were invited to attend CEC, and Greg and myself were fortunate to be in this category in the Western Engineering Conference and Competition (WECC), which took place from January 23-27 in Regina.

Where WECC was more or less a party, the CEC organizers were determinedly serious. The industry tours and beer kegs that rang WECC in over the course of two days were replaced by a single evening including a University tour, a wine and cheese reception, and passes to the University club. We arrived after a day of travelling, with some good friends from UVic (discovered at WECC), only in time for the reception. The UVic team had perhaps three hours of sleep the previous night as they gathered materials for their competition in the Senior Team Design category. They enjoyed their wine in anticipation of a satisfying sleep, only to discover their competition began immediately and ran the duration of the night. Ouch.

The competition ran the following two days in the categories of Corporate Design (Greg's category with his Digi-Cool Digital Refrigeration System Analyzer), Entrepreneurial Design, Editorial Communications, Explanatory Communications (my category with my presentation, "The Healing Vision of Optical Networks"), Team Design, and Extemporaneous Debate. Our competition ranged from hybrid greenhouses for wastewater treatment and horticultural reproductions to discussion



Le Château Frontenac and the St. Lawrence River.
Québec City, Quebec, 2002.

of electron paramagnetic resonance. A presentation by Dr. Marc Garneau, President of the Canadian Space Agency, preceded the banquet and awards presentation, at which Greg pulled in a tie for third. I received fourth in my category, I was told by one of the five judges at the party following. Apparently first and second were essentially a tie, but "Everybody wants a clear winner", as he said, right? Well...perhaps all but one--the thousand dollar cash prize for the third I would have then received would have sat well in my pocket!

Greg and I toured the city (though I had already done so the previous year), through sun and snow, and were almost blown into the St. Lawrence off the Plains of Abraham. The ice sledding was unique, and so too the outdoor pool, which ensured frozen ears and a head-cold for half the delegates, I'm sure. Both Greg and I met many colourful and intelligent people; the engineering community spirit is palpable at both CEC and WECC, and few other events expose such a pool of talented and diverse Canadians.

My recommendation for future competitors: whether in a product design or presentation category, try to ensure an equal mix of ease of understanding, technical complexity, and societal applicability. And make sure you know

you're talking about, and prepare for common questions—it looks very poor to be stumped on a question. Also understand that a significant factor in your success is the pure chance element of the character of your judges. My optical networks presentation, for example, was initially stronger on its technical complexity than in the other two factors mentioned above. A few blank looks from a layperson judge at WECC encouraged me to remove some of the more complex details, and the comments of another judge inspired me to add a societal-interest application (remote surgeries through optical networks). But then at CEC, two of the judges, who by coincidence were optical network specialists, wanted the more complex discussions back in! So you see the variance of judges...

Regardless, remember what my friend from Laval said: "Même si on n'a rien gagné, ça n'enlève rien à toute l'expérience qu'on a pu vivre à la CCI."

I look forward to attending WECC with many of you next year, and perhaps there will be a larger number of us flying to Newfoundland for CEC 2003.

See <http://www.cec.cfes.ca/> for more details.

Eric Hennessey

[engineers without borders @ SFU]

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The beginning of the SFU chapter of Engineers Without Borders this September announces your opportunity to do something meaningful with your skills.

What is Engineers Without Borders (EWB)?

EWB is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to increase the effort applied by engineers and engineering students to solving problems in developing nations (<http://www.ewb-isf.org>). Started in Canadian universities and modeled after Doctors Without Borders, EWB currently lives in 17 universities across the country. EWB's formal mission is to "work to improve the quality of life of people in developing nations and communities by helping find appropriate technical solutions to their challenges".

Who is starting the chapter, and how do I get involved?

Eric Hennessey (eth@sfu.ca) is heading the effort, and all faculty, staff, and, of course, students of all years are invited to assist with whatever talents they have to offer. A September introductory presentation and meeting time will be announced within the first two weeks of classes.

What will we do?

The key goals in accomplishing our mission can be summarized as follows:

- 1) increase student awareness of issues in developing nations and the concept of using one's professional skills for the good of others, and particularly of those less fortunate.
- 2) encourage research and development of appropriate technological solutions and their implementation.



Kathmandu orphans reading by the light of a white light emitting diode. Kathmandu, Nepal, 2001. Courtesy of Light Up The World Foundation.

3) procure and publicize internship and other overseas opportunities.

I hope to address these goals through the following specific actions:

1) host monthly speakers on topics including international development, sustainability engineering, and specific issues in developing nations; organize local trips (to explore sustainability architecture and engineering in BC, for example); and participate in local service activities (house building with Habitat for Humanity, for example).

2) initiate a research project in one or more of the following fields: water distribution and sanitation, information technology infrastructure, landmine removal methods and tools, hospital equipment and sterilization, energy generation and distribution, and housing materials, lighting, refrigeration, cooking, and heating.

3) procure funding for our activities and send a small delegation to a developing nation on a service trip of one to three weeks in length.

Join me in this exciting and worthwhile adventure!

Eric Hennessey



[world youth exchange]

Olha Lui

The other day my friends and I were chatting about life-changing experiences. For some it has been the death of the Queen Mother, while for others it was their high-school graduation or the theft of their car. This chat refreshed my memories about my life-changing experience during a 7-month international youth exchange and made me want to share the experience with others, so here goes.

I was a second-year law school student at that time, and I felt that there should be more to life than books. The opportunity to travel abroad was so exciting that even “volunteering” and the sneering of my peers on prospect of “working for free” didn’t stop me. I learned to speak Polish, passed the selection process, packed my bags and took my first terrifying 16-hour flight over the ocean to arrive at a summer camp near Edmonton. My first memory is of the Canadian participants lying down on the grass with their hands and legs spread out trying to spell “Welcome”. With that, the Canada World Youth Canada-Poland-Ukraine 1997-1998 exchange commenced.

The goal of this exchange was for young people from different cultures and backgrounds to learn about sustainable development, adaptability, team work, cross-cultural communication, leadership and conflict resolution. In my program, Ukrainian and Polish youth were paired with a “counterpart” from Canada and matched with host families in the town of Cochrane, Alberta. For the next three and a half months, our weekly routine included four days of volunteering and three days of community involvement and teamwork. Volunteering was a new concept to Eastern Europeans at that time; however, we all learned about its benefits while working in different positions in Cochrane. These positions ranged from working in the Chamber of Commerce to volunteering at the dog shelter.

My counterpart, Marlène, was from Quebec. She and I volunteered at a local seniors care facility, the Bethany Care Center. This volunteer position was challenging for me in many aspects. The idea of a seniors care facility is not common to Ukrainians since traditionally families live together and take care of their elders. Also, working with Alzheimer’s patients was an extremely stressful and sad experience. However, we learned to be patient and understanding and that some sense of humour and a little laughter can make someone’s day more bearable. We made friends with the residents; celebrated birthdays; had tea hours; and played carpet bowling, bingo and trivia. From this experience, I learned to appreciate the role of seniors facilities in industrial societies, and I have come to recognize a need for such facilities in Ukraine as well.

As a team of 18 volunteers, we researched the community’s needs and offered our help where possible. Team projects included painting the community center, organizing a haunted house for Halloween, and rescuing fish in a nearby river. When it was time to move on to the Polish part of the exchange, we all realized how attached we had become to our host families, work colleagues and community members. Overwhelmed with the sadness of leaving Cochrane but inspired towards new achievements, we continued on a trip to Poland.

The Polish part of the exchange was probably more challenging for some Canadian participants due to the particulars of Sztum and nearby rural towns where our host families were living. Some had to get used to buses that left earlier than the schedule said; some had cold water for their morning shower; and some had to walk 8-9 km to work when they missed the bus in 30 below zero weather; and everyone was faced with the troubles of a language barrier. This time, my volunteer position was in the nursery at a local day care center. Four of us were

taking care of 10 to 15 babies who were from 7 months to 2 years of age. We also helped with English lessons for the older kids. Patience and a sense of humour saved me again in this case just as in the seniors care facility. As a group, the entire program fundraised for the local heart disease hospital and organized basketball tournaments at the local school.

Most of my memories are related to traveling to Polish cultural centers such as Krakow, Warszawa and Gdansk. Walking the streets of these cities felt like a visit to a museum of gothic architecture. We also had a group visit to the Baltic shore where one can collect small bits of amber in the sand. The visits to the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Brzezinka gave us a chilling reminder of war and genocide. Meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, was a memorable experience about which we can brag to our friends. We also learned about the knights’ history and traditions of Poland, enjoyed traditional Polish food and hospitality on Christmas and everyday, and visited the castles of Malbork and Sztum and the skiing resort of the Carpathian Mountains.

Once again it was time to pack our bags and say goodbye. This time, we were parting with our team members and counterparts from overseas, so it was so much sadder since we did not know whether we would ever see each other again. We realized how much we had grown together as a team and individually during those seven months. I probably speak for everyone when I say that we will cherish the memories created during this exchange forever.

For me the cultural exchange continues till this day, since I met my husband-to-be in this program and moved to Canada soon after my graduation from law school. Now I’m happily married and studying engineering. Hence, it was truly a life changing experience!

[my experience in prague]

Humphrey Ng

Edited by Gregory Fung

Would you consider Eastern Europe for a student exchange? I was on an exchange to Charles University, in Prague from January to May, 2002. The experience proved to be a valuable and enjoyable one. Here's a quick introduction to daily life in Prague, Czech Republic.



You may recognize this Charles Bridge from movies like Mission Impossible and XXX.

First Impression

I arrived at the Prague (Praha) Ruzyně airport expecting the city to be covered with all snow in the end of January. Apparently two weeks before my arrival, there was a record high snow fall in Prague, so I was really lucky that the weather was quite warm throughout spring. The temperature in Prague in spring is quite similar to Vancouver, except it is much drier. Summer time it is much hotter comparing to Vancouver, and usually has thunder showers towards the evening. Back to the day of my arrival. Because Lenka, the student liaison found out that she could not pick me up at the last minute, we (me and Eric, another exchangee from Texas who later became my roommate) took a cab from airport to our dorm. Being in a post-communist country, cab drivers are notorious to rip new comers off. YES, we got ripped. A

ride that should have cost around 200 Kc (\$10 Cdn) was raised to 500 Kc (\$25). Always negotiate the price before hopping on the cab. Another disturbing thing is the toilet there is not free. This is actually true for the entire Europe, so make sure you carry some change wherever you go!

Food

For breakfast at the dormitory I stayed, there were hard boiled eggs, ham, cheese, red peppers, APRICOTS (seems like they like this fruit here!), pudding, bread, orange juice, coffee and tea, all you can eat style. I eat so much every morning that I don't need to eat lunch at all. There is a kitchen in the dorm, so to save money (for beer) I always cook myself. For eating out, the local restaurants serve deep fried pork or chicken, dumplings, etc. A meal plus a drink usually cost about 100 Kc, or \$5.



Kitchen. Notice the alcohol bottles on the shelf!

Transportation

We were taking the subway for the first time. Not knowing what to do, we bought the children tickets instead of the adult

ones. Suddenly two guys wearing trench coat come to us and ask us for tickets. It ends up that these two guys are undercover for the subway crew, and no matter how much we tried to explain to them that we are fresh off the boat and don't know how the system works, they still want us to pay a penalty. The people who are with me are so freaked out and paid the fine on the spot, for 400 crown (20 Cdn). If I was by myself, there is no way that I would pay them. This time, I considered it a good lesson.



A day on the tram. Be careful of the undercover ticket persons!

Class

The first 2 weeks everybody in the program was obligated to take the Intensive Czech lessons, which I found very useful and I recommend people to continue learning the language. After all, Czech language is (or so I heard) 95% similar to Slovak, 70% similar to Polish, and at least 50% similar to Croatian and Slovenia, and like 30% similar to Russian! Very useful to learn indeed! One regret that I have is that most classes are being taken with other International students (read: American). I would hope that there are at least some Czech students but I was very disappointed. Classes are so relaxed that the teachers don't care very much about attendance and quality of the work produced. In the first day we were encouraged to take trips in the middle of the week without worrying about school work. ☺

[my experience in prague]

Weekend Travels

The program I was in organized 3-4 trips during the semester, but many people choose not to go for some reason. (such as "I have to get up at 8am on Saturday!!") All these trips were free and they were really awesome! We went to Terezin, the concentration camp with my history professor, whose mother passed away in that camp so it was a really emotional experience. When there are no trips during the weekend, it was great fun of staring on the wall map on Thursday night trying to decide which country to visit during the weekend. Check out my website for my travel encounters! The web address is <http://www.sfu.ca/~hngc>.



Weekend trip in Nika's village.

Money Matters

Groceries were not very expensive, although the exchange rate is getting worse and worse for us Canadians. Don't bother bringing traveller's cheques. ATM cards are sufficient although they charge 2.5 Cdn for each transaction, it still proves to be a better rate than traveller's cheques.

What I Miss About Prague the Most

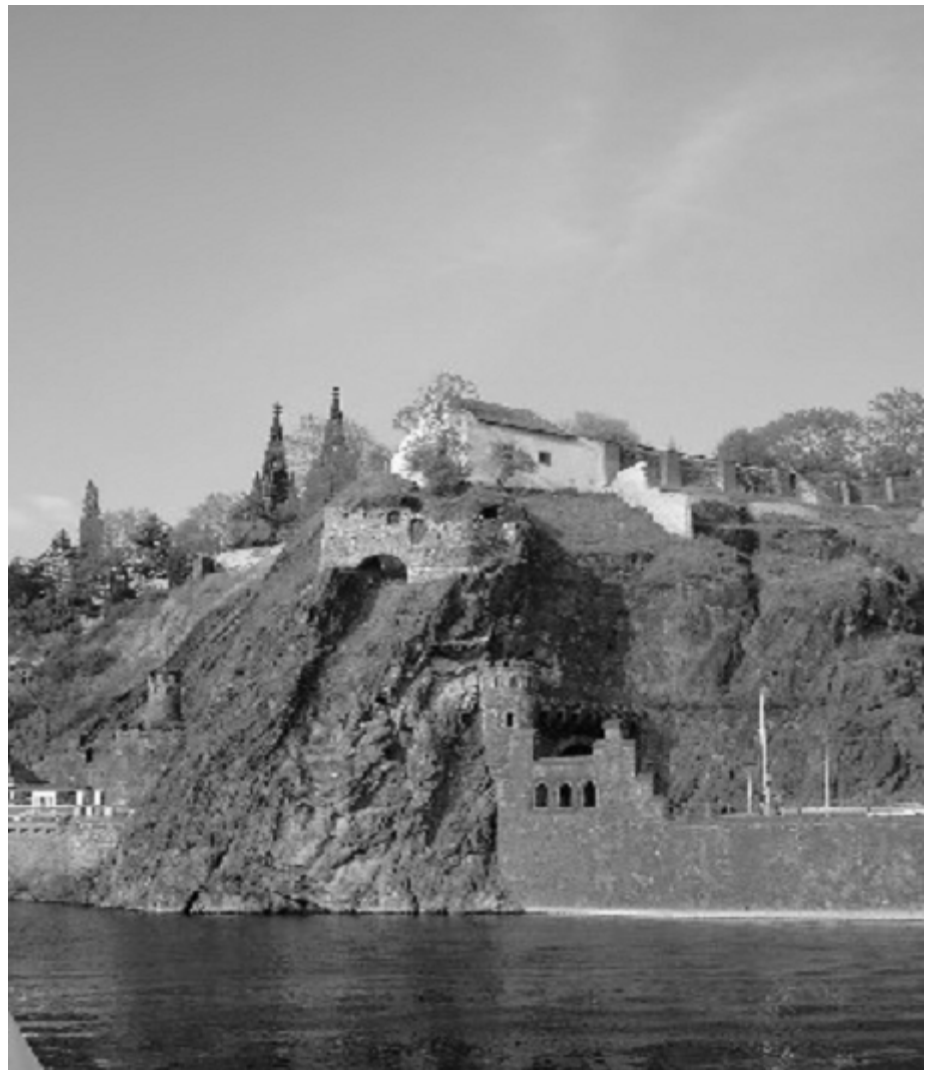
1. Smazeny syr v houska (fried cheese sandwich in a bun)
2. 5 hour laundry that costs 20 Kc at the dormitory
3. Field trips

4. Planning trips every weekend
5. Buffet breakfast/lunch/snack
6. Wandering at night in castle, Charles bridge and old town square
7. Drunk roommates
8. Stinky night trams
9. Sparta hockey games
10. 14 Kc for 1/2 L beer
11. Dormitory TV that only shows soccer, CNN, and Germany MTV
12. Stomach ache after absinth
13. Attempt to speak Czech when everyone responds in English
14. Getting rip off from taxi ride
15. Lots of hot Czech girls

16. Dying my hair red
17. Undercover transit patrols
18. Subway lady saying "au contre de prosim, vystup a nastup..."
19. Tram lady saying "pristi zavstavska, pohorelec"
20. Vending machine that sells beer

Conclusion

So did I interest you in going to the Czech Republic for exchange? For more information, please feel free to look at my webpage www.sfu.ca/~hngc.



Vysherad from the boat.

[energy]

[vision]

[growth]

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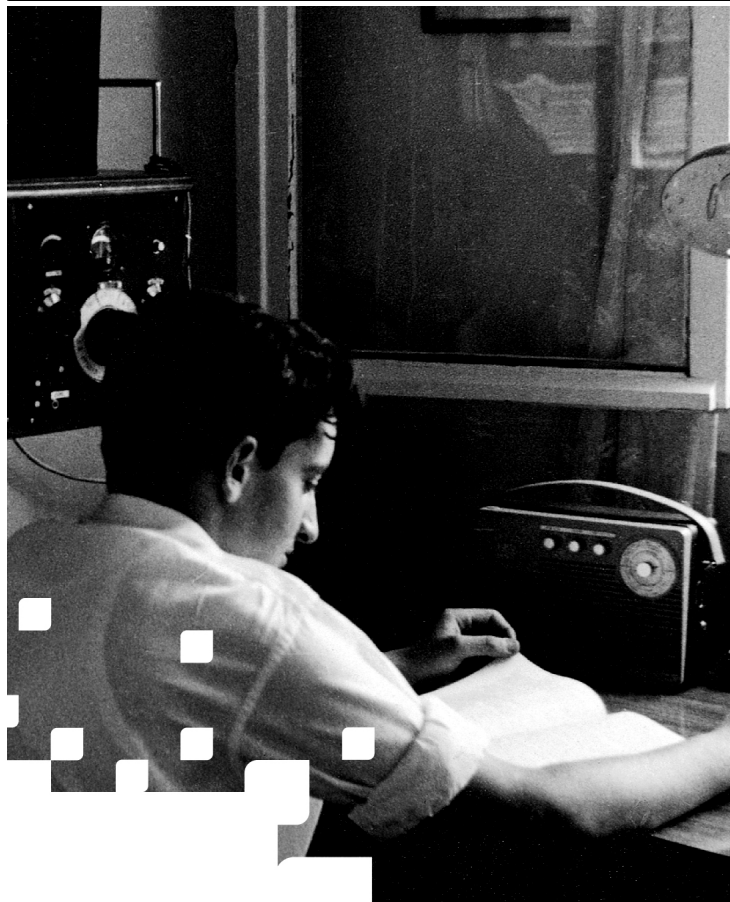


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[go pee in the pond]

Rhiannon Coppin
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You would think that at a university named for a Scottish man, the men's washrooms would have the "figure wearing the kilt" as a sign on the door. How confusing it is then, for me at least, to find the appropriate washroom to use: Who wears the kilt and who doesn't?



At a 'Scottish' university, which symbol applies to you?

There are many problems with the current washroom-situation. No, I'm not speaking of graffiti, weird smells, line-ups, lack of toilet paper ("Damn! Should have checked before I sat down..."), and the fact that I can't pee in silence when I know someone is around. I'm speaking of the problem that some members of Canadian society and the SFU community alike face every day: which washroom is for me?

Studies of documented medical records in North America estimate that one out of every 100 of us deviates from the physical 'norm' of either male or female [www.isna.org]. Some of these deviations are almost unnoticeable, but these statistics applied blindly to the SFU population imply that out of 18,000, 180 of us physically differ from standard medical definitions of male and female. A number of us, perhaps 18 or so, may have XXY chromosomal makeup. Up to 150 of us XX people, due to hormonal action, may have developed very pronounced clitori (though really, all clitori are just small penises at base.) If one out of 2,000 of you men are hypospadiastic (which means that your urethral opening is located in your perineum or along your

penile shaft), does that mean that someone giving you a blowjob wouldn't have to swallow? Okay, that was in poor taste.

Now I have not ever met, to my knowledge, a person who considers him or herself intersexed, so I really can't say that I know that, for any of them, the 'washroom-choice issue' is an issue at all. I do, however, assume that they do use the washroom, so if up to 180 people of a sex other than yours are using the same public toilet as you, why are the washrooms segregated at all?

Some problems have arisen with our seemingly archaic (or puritan?) system of washroom segregation. This year, at a Nanaimo high school, a parent's group pushed to have a transsexual student banned from using the "women's" washroom. Also this year, a southern California man attempted to have lesbians banned from the "women's" washroom at his daughter's high school. Why are these situations threatening for some people, including a fair number of SFU students? As Vancouver Island School Trustee June Harrison uttered: "Worrying about bathrooms is a very North American thing. We all use the same bathrooms in our homes. What does it matter what bathroom a person uses?"

Initially the impetus for this article came from the vigilante-side of my personality that wanted to advocate for the inclusion of a few gender-neutral washrooms on campus. After reading, discussing, and re-thinking, I realized that this is an incredibly stupid issue — period. Washrooms should not be segregated at all, and the fact that they still are is a result of the "that's the way things have always been" mantra.

Now, you say, a woman writing an article that advocates more washroom access for herself is merely being led by that one part of her body that clouds her judgement, makes her do stupid things, and leaves her unable to concentrate in

certain situations — her bladder. True, I think that waiting in line to use the "women's" washroom is absurd when the next-door "men's" washroom is being underemployed. I would potentially benefit from having more stalls available for my urges. I freely admit this.

On the other hand, I would lose very precious commodities: the ability to cry, apply makeup, and adjust my brassiere in the absence of men. I would also be giving up my 'privilege' to stare when a transvestite or transsexual, or even sometimes 'butchy' woman enters. I would be giving up my privilege to intimidate, be intimidated, and exclude.

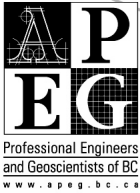
As for "men," I have heard that some feel they would have a problem 'whipping it out' at the urinal in the presence of women. I simply cannot understand this. By my own observations a good number of you enjoy doing so at all times of the day, sometimes in plain view of women while you are on the street, in your cars, on the bus, etc.

In performing research for this piece, I read a lot of anti-washroom-de-segregation viewpoints from a UK website. The most serious issue brought up is the belief, by women, that they would not feel safe in a co-ed washroom. I asked myself in return, what is stopping a man from walking into any women's washroom today? Wouldn't a woman be safer in a washroom that is 50% more likely (or 40% here at SFU) to have a witness or a third party enter should something be awry?

After reading this far, you might very well be thinking: "You're making a big deal over washrooms? There are much more important things to focus your energy on," and I agree. It is just a stupid washroom, so indeed why don't we all just 'get over it'? Do you have a good reason for or against my pro-integration stance? Write to the ENSCquire with your views, or do not; either way, I don't give a crap.

APEG MAPS

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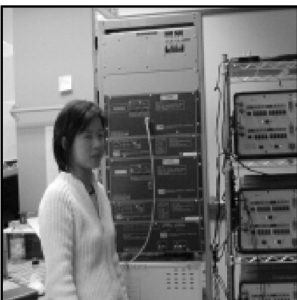
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[making a difference]

Natisha Joshi
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This summer, I worked with some talented engineers in Toronto. My supervisor has an undergraduate in Engineering science from the University of Toronto, and a PhD in physics. I also worked with an industrial engineer, a mechanical engineer, and a systems engineer. From time to time, I collaborated with an electrical engineer.

Well actually, he served me coffee in the café downstairs.

Ever think where your degree could take you? Better yet, ever think where you could take your degree?

I didn't land the co-op job I was looking for this past summer. My old company laid off almost all the engineers I worked with, and a potential job with another company fell through due to lack of funding. So I headed home to Mississauga, Ontario in search of a

summer job. What I found, taught me more than I could have ever expected.

I worked for CATIE - the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange. It's a non-profit organization that provides support and information regarding health and treatment to people living in Canada affected by AIDS. They create and disseminate material via email, phone, web, workshops, and publications to thousands of people and organizations worldwide.

The staff at CATIE can't be more than 30 people. And yet, it reflects a wide range of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and professions, including four accomplished engineers. While I was there I compiled and analyzed statistics, wrote internal performance reports, and performed journal research related to social behavior of people affected by AIDS. More importantly though, was that while I was there, I met some amazing people coping with AIDS who taught me so many things and opened my eyes.

It's really easy, particularly in a grueling engineering program, to lose sight of the big picture. I know I've often been focused on my ambitions: getting the good grades, finishing my degree, getting my professional designation, then going back to law school, and then working for a high-roller patent firm in the States, chasing the big buck and so on. Focused you say? Or distracted?

I've decided to volunteer my time to the BCPWA foundation - BC People With AIDS Foundation. As engineers, I believe we are in a position to give back to society, to better this world. It doesn't need to be by building some fancy gadget or machine...it can be as simple as giving our time and energy.

Natisha Joshi



[editor's note]

After a long hiatus, the Enscquire is back, and better than ever (or so I hope)! If not, we can always point to the fact that I am only temporarily disguised as VP Publications, while the real VP Publications is off having the time of her life in Yugoslavia! ☺

I could not have pulled off this issue without the contributions of many talented writers and editors. They deserve much credit for sharing their thoughts, experiences, and opinions with us. So, a huge thanks to everyone who helped! You guys rock! ☺

The next issue of Enscquire is coming your way in November, so send an email to euss-vp-publications@sfu.ca if you

have something to share, or just feel like babbling away! The editor is always looking for more articles here at Enscquire, and dedicated students who are willing to volunteer their time!

Remember, the opinions presented in Enscquire belong to their respective authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, EUSS, or SFU Engineering. If you wish to comment on any of the articles in this issue, email the editor at euss-vp-publications@sfu.ca!

Biljana, if you are reading this, you owe me a **long** article about life in Yugo!! Not to mention many, many beers!! ☺

Josephine Wong, Editor

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