IEEE
QUEENSLAND SECTION
NEWSLETTER

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Newsletter editor: Mike Robinson (blackmagic@computer.org)

In this issue:

Newsletter editor's report

MIKE ROBINSON
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Hello, and welcome to the latest edition of IEEE Queensland Section's newsletter.

I've made two small changes to the newsletter which I hope improves it:

- Paragraphs are no longer indented
- Authors' photos are larger.

The newsletter contains further items from the July contributors, plus additional material from the Computational Intelligence Society, Student Services, and Griffith University PES student branch.

My recent trip to Ottawa to take part in the 2023 Sections Congress in August makes up the bulk of this newsletter.

Writing the SC2023 report is the reason the newsletter has been delayed slightly. Collating such a detailed report requires lots of time, oodles of research, and gallons of mental energy.

The two-column format, which I prefer to use, can create lots of hyphenated words. An editor needs extra skill to eliminate hyphenation or keep it to a minimum. Often words have to be replaced or repositioned. Progress is glacial, sometimes it takes place word by word.

Another issue is the "hanging word". This happens when a single word, or part of a word, appears on a line by itself at the end of a paragraph. Removing it is often a tedious process.

Cropping and reducing the size of supplied photos is another time-consuming task.

I am indebted to the charming and delightful Ewell Tan for her assistance with the SC2023 report.

Ewell supplied me with a library of over 1,000 photographs taken at the Congress. Some of them appear in the SC2023 report.

Ewell also inspired me to write a mini-biography of her, which I hope readers will enjoy as much as I enjoyed writing it. She is a very talented person.

In conclusion I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this newsletter. I hope future editions will have more contributors.

Enjoy!!

Awards and Recognition Chair

MIKE ROBINSON
blackmagic@computer.org

The last time I was Awards and Recognition Chair was in 2014. Consequently I've had to dig back into my records to find examples of past awards ceremonies.

The purpose of this article is to define what the annual awards are, and how they will be conducted.

The 2023 Queensland Section awards relate to events that happened in 2022. Student awards are for outstanding performance in 2023; they may include thesis awards, best student awards, and best student paper awards.

There are several Section awards:
- Recognition of service awards
- Outstanding Contribution awards
- Volunteer of the Year award

Recognition of Service awards are an official recognition of a Section committee member's contribution in a particular role and are awarded at the first AGM following the completion of a person's term in a role.

Outstanding Contribution awards go to Section committee members who have made a significant contribution during their term in a role. Awards are presented at the first AGM following the completion of a person's term in a role. The awards require a seconded nomination from members of the Queensland Section, along with a reason for the nomination.

Section Volunteer of the Year is awarded to the Section member who is regarded as having made the most substantial contribution during their time in office. Only people who have completed their term of office are eligible. A single plaque is awarded each year. Nominations are submitted to the Section committee for adjudication.

Soon I will compile a list of last year's committee members. When that is completed I will contact those committee members to solicit nominations for the Outstanding Contribution and Volunteer of the Year awards.

Aerospace and Electronic Systems Chapter

Vuaghan Clarkson
v.clarkson@ieee.org

Committee:
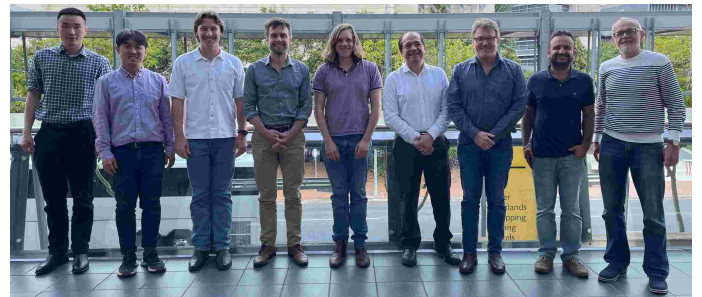Chair: Vaughan Clarkson
Vice-chair: Robert Kennedy

The Queensland Section's AESS chapter got off the mark this year with another in our series of short courses. This one was titled "Introduction to Tracking and Sensor Fusion". The lecturers were A/Prof. Branko Ristic and Dr. Du Yong Kim, both of RMIT University. It was held on Monday and Tuesday, 28th & 29th August, at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC).

Attendance was a little smaller than we'd hoped, with only 7 students. However, for the attendees themselves, it was all upside. The atmosphere of the small group made for a convivial experience with lots of opportunities to ask questions and receive individual attention.

The attendees were honoured by Branko and Du Yong in being the first to benefit from the colossal amount of effort they had put into preparing the notes. A thorough overview of the field was presented. The notes and Matlab code they shared with attendees will serve as an invaluable reference for years to come.

As a reminder, the International Conference on Radar (Radar '23) is returning to Australia on its five-year rotation. IEEE Queensland Section is underwriting the conference, which is taking place in Sydney at the International Convention Centre (ICC) on Darling Harbour on 6th &10th November. The conference website is here. Registration is open now. A further incentive to make the trip to Sydney is that Radar '23 is being held in conjunction with the giant INDOPAC naval exhibition, also at the ICC.

The lecturers, Du Yong Kim and Branko Ristic, are second from left and at far right, respectively

Prof. Ristic instructs students

I mentioned in the previous newsletter that we are planning a collaboration with the Association of Old Crows, a technical professional organisation that specialises in electronic warfare. We hope to be able to announce the details of that event within days. Look out for it!

Computational Intelligence Society Chapter

MARCUS GALLAGHER
marcusg@uq.edu.au

Committee:
Chair: Marcus Gallagher
Vice-chair: Vacant
Secretary: Vacant

The International Joint Conference on Neural Networks (IJCNN 2023) was held from June 18th-23rd at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.

IJCNN is one of the flagship technical conferences of the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society and was sponsored and organized jointly by IEEE CIS and the International Neural Network Society (INNS).

The conference has been running since 1987 and was previously held in Australia in 1995 (Perth) and in 2012 (Brisbane) as a part of the World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI).

IJCNN 2023 received 1888 papers submitted by 5778 authors from over 63 countries, 89 of which were later withdrawn or final manuscripts were not submitted. Of these, 1034 papers (54.76%) were accepted. More than 1000 attendees registered to attend the conference.

The IJCNN 2023 program covers many topics in the areas of neural networks and applications including deep learning architectures, cognitive architectures, brain-inspired architectures, vision and robotics, forecasting, explainable AI, semantic cognition, contrastive learning, reinforcement learning, federated learning, biomedical and cyber security applications.

The program featured 108 in-person oral presentation sessions, 42 virtual oral presentation sessions and 3 poster sessions. The program also featured 6 keynote speeches, 2 panel discussions, 11 tutorials, 5 workshops, 18 special sessions, and one competition.

Humphrey Munn (UQ and CSIRO PhD student), A/Prof Marcus Gallagher (UQ), Prof Janet Wiles (UQ), and Dr Alina Bialkowski (UQ)

Attendees at conference banquet

Professor Brijesh Verma (who is a member of our local Queensland CIS Chapter and a previous volunteer) was the General Co-Chair for IJCNN2023.

I attended the conference, along with a number of other IEEE Queensland members and students. I also had the pleasure of Chairing the Conference Banquet. It was an excellent conference in spectacular Gold Coast winter weather.

IJCNN provides a great opportunity for students and researchers to connect and talk about their recent work. This is something that has been sorely missed during recent years with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Videos of the keynote talks as well as many photos from the conference are available at the conference website.

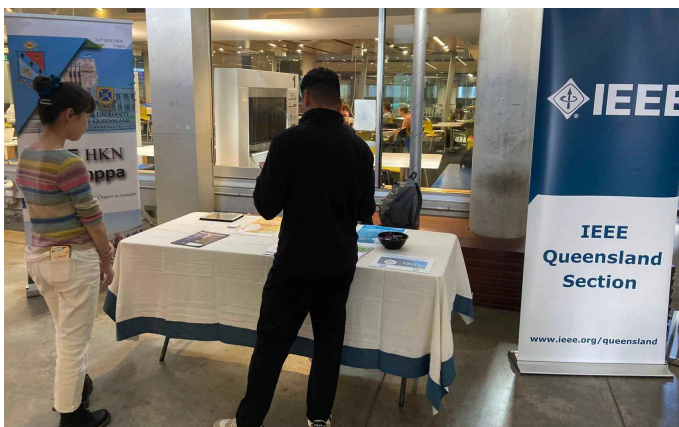# Eta Kappa Nu Society

RAVEENA WADHWANI
r.wadhwani@uq.edu.au

Committee:
Chair: Raveena Wadhwani
Vice-chair: Grace Margaretha
Secretary: Linfeng Liu
Treasurer: Yunda Xu
Media: Zachary Sean Grice

IEEE Membership Drive

The recent IEEE membership drive, held jointly with the IEEE UQ Student Branch and the IEEE PES UQ Student Branch, proved to be an engaging and successful event aimed at promoting the benefits of IEEE HKN membership among students.

Held at Hawken Engineering Building, University of Queensland, the event featured a dynamic approach to membership drive strategies and drew the attention of numerous students.

Membership drive brochures

The event effectively communicated the benefits of IEEE HKN Society membership and captured the curiosity of the attendees through distributing informative flyers.

The collaborative effort among IEEE HKN, the UQ Student Branch, and the PES Student Branch added a special dimension to the event.

The representatives from all three chapters were well-prepared to answer queries and provide insights into the benefits of becoming a part of the global IEEE community.

This partnership showcased the unity and shared objectives of IEEE organizations in promoting academic excellence, leadership, and professional growth among students.

Several students expressed their interest in becoming members of the IEEE HKN Society after learning about the unique networking opportunities, leadership development programs, and access to exclusive resources.

The event successfully attracted a cohort of prospective student members who recognized the value that the IEEE HKN Society could add to their academic journey.

In summary, the IEEE membership drive achieved its goal of raising awareness about the benefits of IEEE membership.

Through visually appealing flyers and engaging interactions, the event earned interest from a number of students.

Annual General Meeting and New Committee

The combined IEEE HKN Society Annual General Meeting (AGM) and committee elections were held on July 3rd, 2023.

The AGM started with a warm welcome, followed by an insightful overview of the IEEE HKN Society's milestones and achievements throughout the previous year.

Committee reports highlighted successful workshops, seminars, and collaborative activities that contributed to the organization's impact on both academic and professional development.

The election process, conducted with professionalism and fairness, allowed members to cast their votes for the candidates they believed would best contribute to the organization's growth.

After the votes were cast and counted, the newly elected committee was announced:
- Chair: Raveena Wadhwani
- Vice-chair: Grace Margaretha
- Secretary: Linfeng Liu
- Treasurer: Yunda Xu
- Media Officer: Zachary Sean Grice

The retiring committee members were acknowledged for their dedicated service and contributions, which had significantly shaped the IEEE HKN Society's activities and impact.

The election left attendees inspired and optimistic about the organization's future under the guidance of the new committee.

Life Members Affinity Group

JOHN GOUGH
john@atwell-gough.com

Committee:
Chair: John Gough
Vice-chair: Mike Robinson

The Queensland Section's Life Members Affinity Group (LMAG) is expected to hold a total of three events during the remainder of this calendar year.

The first event will be in October, and will feature a talk from Professor David Abramson, director of the Research Computing Centre of the University of Queensland.

David was recently awarded the ACM/IEEE Ken Kennedy Award for his work in parallel and distributed computing.

David's talk will be of interest to all members of the IEEE family. It will not be focused on the technology of high performance computing, but rather on the way in which the latest HPCs are used to help solve problems in many, many fields. Details of the event will be sent out to the LMAG membership shortly.

The other two events will be, again, focused on topics of general interest to the LMAG membership.

One will be an attempt at demystifying the current fad of artificial intelligence.

The third event will focus on microwave communication.

For further information on these events, and about the LMAG more generally, you can contact me at the e-mail address above.

IEEE Day 2023

MIKE ROBINSON
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I have been appointed an **R10 IEEE Day 2023 Ambassador**.

IEEE Day is celebrated to commemorate the first time in history when engineers worldwide and IEEE members gathered to share their technical ideas in 1884.

IEEE Day's theme is: "*Leveraging Technology for a Better Tomorrow*". This year, celebrations will be held on Tuesday, October 3rd, 2023.

In my role as an IEEE Day Ambassador, my responsibilities will include:

- Contacting section committees, student branches, affinity groups (Women in Engineering, Young Professionals, Life Members) and chapters to inform them about IEEE Day and to moitvate them in creating IEEE Day events

- Collaborating with various organizational units to facilitate the organization of local IEEE Day events and pinning them on the IEEE Day map

- Contributing to IEEE Day marketing campaigns

- Promoting IEEE by sharing the IEEE benefits

- Encouraging new members to join IEEE and current members to renew their memberships

- Assisting in recruiting future IEEE Day Ambassadors

- Maintaining communication with the Regional Lead and the IEEE Day team, updating them on the progress of my activties.

- Parcipating on social media platforms (Facebook and Collabratec) sharing the events to work together and exchange new ideas between ambassadors

- Completing activities to earn the IEEE Day badge in IEEE Collabratec

I have set up a preliminary IEEE Day website, which is under construction. It can be viewed here.

The possibility of Australian Sections collaborating in joint IEEE Day events was discussed at a recent Australia Council meeting.

If you have a good idea for an IEEE Day event, or want help planning one, please contact me on the above e-mail address.

Student Activities

HUI MA
huima@itee.uq.edu.au

IEEE Queensland Section Student Energy Forecasting Competition 2023

Why – Numerous state-of-the-art data analytic techniques have been adopted for energy forecasting. This competition promotes data analytics in power engineering education.

Who can attend – Current undergraduate students and Masters by Coursework students at Queensland University.

When – July 18 to December 8, 2023.

        July 18, 2023 – Competition Starts
        November 28, 2023 – Competition Ends
        December 8 – Winners Announced

What – two tracks (1) individual household electricity consumption forecasting
                      (2) PV generation forecasting

Where – the competition will be hosted on Kaggle as follows:

Track (1) https://www.kaggle.com/t/bc6f6701b6924f4eabf9fdbcde769053

Track (2) https://www.kaggle.com/t/097e28bfbdf546cd949e07dc9d630257

How – The competition rules, datasets and submission information are available from the above websites. The final winners will be determined by the judging panel based on forecasting accuracy, reproducibility, and documentation.

Prize – Track 1: 1st place $300; 2nd place $100.

          Track 2: 1st place $300; 2nd place $100.

Please email to Dr. Hui Ma (huima@itee.uq.edu.au) to register your attendance.

Important note: Click **here** for the first Kaggle website, and click **here** for the second Kaggle website.

Griffith University PES Student Branch

YUE QU
yue.qu2@griffithuni.edu.au

Committee:
Chair: Yue Qu
Vice-chair: Hamza Mubarak
Secretary: Muhammad Naveen Naz
Treasurer: Weichong Yao
Media: Muhammad Ajmal Khan

We are thrilled that our first IEEE Power and Energy Society event was a resounding success!

On August 15th we gathered virtually/in person at the Engineering & Built Environment Building, Griffith University Nathan campus to explore the forefront of power and energy innovations. The event exceeded all expectations.

This success would not have been possible without the dedication of our incredible speaker Dr. Jinhui Wu and the participants.

Dr. Wu is a Research Fellow at University College London. He received his Bachelor Engineering degree in Electrical Engineering and Automation from Zhejiang University of Science and Technology, Hangzhou, China, in 2017, and his Doctorate in Control Theory and Control Engineering from Zhejiang University of Technology.

His current research interests include predictive control, microgrid and distributed control. His talk for the student branch was titled Predictive Control and its Applications.

We invite you to stay connected with IEEE Power and Energy Society student branch to continue exploring the ever-evolving landscape of power and energy.

Please follow us for upcoming events, webinars, and industry news updates.

Dr. Jinhui Wu

Student participants

Student participants

Student participants

Students networking

Students networking

Bits and Pieces

The 2023 Annual General Meeting and Dinner will be held on November 24th at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

The AGM starts at 4:30pm, and the dinner will run from 6pm to 9pm.

The keynote speaker will be Jacqui Bridge, EGM Energy Futures, Powerlink Queensland.

The dinner pricing schedule is as follows:
- **Member** $80.00
- **Non-member** $150.00
- **EE Societies (IET, EA)** $100.00
- **IEEE Student members** $40.00
- **Students (non-members)** $60.00
- **Company table** (8 attendees) $1,000.00

Jennifer Zapata Giraldo has resigned from the Section Treasurer position, due to ill health. We thank Jen for the enthusiasm and flair she brought to the Executive Committee, and we wish her a speedy recovery.

Richard Yan is the new Section Treasurer.

Mike Robinson is the Awards and Recognition Chair for 2023.

The Queensland Section has won an award for Outstanding Member Recruitment and Retention Performance in 2023. View the award here.

Professor Brian Lovell from UQ recently had an article published in **Spectrum** magazine about his research in AI-assisted Digital Pathology.

The article is available here.

Professor Lovell's work in AI-assisted Digital Pathology was recognised nationally when UQ and Sullivan & Nicolaides Pathology received a prestigious award at the 30th annual Australian Information Industry Association event in Adelaide on August 31st.

A detailed report is available here.

IEEE Day will be celebrated on Tuesday October 3rd, 2023. Look out for further announcements.

A preliminary IEEE Day website has been set up. It can be viewed here.

Sections Congress 2023 report

MIKE ROBINSON
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Getting there

When Om Perkash, the Queensland Section chair, asked me to take his place at the 2023 Sections Congress in Ottawa, Canada, I thought little about the journey ahead of me. I had a valid passport but would need visas for Canada and the USA.

Having acquired the visas online I cancelled a dental appointment and put my weekly belly-dancing class on hold. Small sacrifices indeed, in exchange for the trip of a lifetime. Eagerly I accepted Om's offer to represent the Queensland Section at the first Sections Congress since 2017.

My flight arrangements and hotel booking were organised by Om. All I had to do was pack a bag and make my way by train to the airport. Actually I packed two bags as I was unsure of the dress protocol at the Sections Congress, and the weather in Ottawa during August could be mild or it could be bitter. Best to take no chances.

The 14-hour Air Canada flight from Brisbane to Vancouver was a few minutes late taking off, a harbinger of what was to come later in the week. Onboard I discovered Daniel Eghbal, also from the Queensland Section, and Mostafa Azghadi, Chair of the Northern Australia Section.

From Vancouver to Ottawa is a 4-hour, 33-minute flight, equivalent to flying from Sydney to Perth. Air Canada offered no meals during this trip, though snacks were available to purchase. Non-alcoholic drinks were free in plastic cups, but if one wanted to buy a can of diet Coke it would make a serious dent in one's wallet. Stingy? You bet! But there was worse to come later.

On arrival in Ottawa (need I mention that the plane was late?) the weather seemed fine, but suddenly the plane was enveloped in thick fog. In a window seat over the right wing I couldn't see the wing-tip. The plane taxied to a terminal in dense fog. Welcome to Ottawa!

After clearing customs the three intrepid Queenslanders climbed into a waiting taxi and headed for hotels in the CBD. On arriving in the outer suburbs I was intrigued by the architecture of this unique city. We passed row after row of red-brick family homes, each one similar to its neighbour except for its roof, which would be either A-frame or dormer-style. The latter reminded me of rural Holland, where I lived during the mid-1970s.

Typical family homes in suburban Ottawa

August 11th - Day 1

My hotel was literally across the street from the convention centre. Crossing the street in Ottawa meant looking left instead of looking right, as we would do in Australia to avoid being struck by passing vehicles. Inside the convention centre was another reminder that I was in North America: the up elevator was on the right and the down elevator was on the left. So much to learn, and so little time.

Section Congress days started at 7:00am and finished at varying times, depending on the day. Breakfast was served in the convention centre each morning, as were all other meals during the Congress. This obviated eating at my hotel.

Each of the 10 regions attending the Congress met separately on the first day. The small Region 10 meeting room had a dais and a projection screen at the front, with two rows of seating down opposite sides for delegates, and further seating at the rear of the room for members of the Region's executive committee.

Each seat had a delegate's name on it. My seat was on the side of the room opposite where other Australia Council delegates were seated. Once I found my seat I was confronted with the biggest surprise of the entire weekend: seated behind me was Ewell Tan!

Ewell is a project manager in the Singapore office. For years I have been receiving official Region 10 e-mails from her. The earliest e-mail I have from Ewell dates back to April 2015.

Even though I knew very little about her, I had somehow imagined that Ewell would be an older person. Her long career at the IEEE suggested so.

Ewell was running the R10 meeting, introducing speakers and setting up their video presentations. I

introduced myself during a coffee break and Ewell suggested taking a selfie. More about Ewell later.

Selfie of Ewell Tan and MJR

Toshio Fukuda was among the delegates seated in the executive committee block. He was IEEE President in 2020, and has visited Australia several times over a 20-year period. I had with me a flyer from his visit to Brisbane in 2003, which I wanted to present to him. The flyer is here.

Mike-san and Toshio Fukuda

When Toshio saw the flyer his natural smile widened. He enveloped me in a bear hug that took my breath away. Cue for another selfie. It seemed that we were about to become friends for life. Fine with me!

Later that morning Toshio gave me a gift, a small aluminium can covered in Japanese writing. I asked one of the Japanese delegates to translate

Opening Dinner

The dinner was held in the convention centre's largest hall, capable of seating 1,000 delegates at tables for 10. Portable mini-bars had been set up outside the hall for pre-dinner drinks, but when I got there the mini-bars closed abruptly.

I entered the cavernous hall hoping to find other Australian delegates. A team of techicians was siuated in a booth at the back of the hall. Their function was to project the proceedings on to giant overhead screens dangling above the diners.

Soon I found a table with one vacant seat. Most people at the table were from Australia. Vijay Paul was seated on my left, Ewell Tan was on my right, and Fouad Karouta was two seats further away on my right. Good, I thought. I'm not surrounded by complete strangers.

The waiters assigned to our table took our dinner orders. The choice for the main course was chicken or beef. Back in the 1960s, when I lived in Australian boarding houses, the choice used to be chicken or feathers. This time I chose beef.

There were two bottles of wine on the table, a white and a red. I opened the red and Vijay opened the white. A quick taste of the red informed me it was uninteresting. I named it *Chateau Miserablé*.

With the meal despatched and the two wine bottles emptied, the table was cleared and we settled

it for me. My knowledge of Japanese covers only three words: *Konnichiwa* means Hello, *Sayonara* means Goodbye, and *Nissan* means rust. The can contained ingredients for making Japanese tea.

When the R10 meeting ended I went back to the hotel to freshen up for the evening's dinner.

in for the evening's entertainment. A troupe of colourfully dressed local Algonquin tribespeople invaded the stage. They welcomed us to their country and told us about their ancestors, the original inhabitants of eastern Canada. One young lady did all the talking and explaining, while the remainder danced and sang in their ancient tongue.

After the dinner I met up with an old friend from Ireland, Professor Mike Hinchey. Mike is Director of Region 8, which includes Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and his delegation at the Sections Congress numbered 120 people. Mike and I had agreed earlier in the day that we would relax after the day's events in an Irish pub that he knew of, not far from the convention centre.

What Mike hadn't told me was that he was bringing a few people from his delegation along with him. Among them was Professor Izzet Kale, Chair of the IEEE UK and Ireland Section, who turned out to be a discerning judge of ribald humour.

After the half glass of *Chateau Miserablé* I drank at the dinner, I would have gone anywhere on the planet to indulge in some convivial libations with like-minded people.

So we set off in search of the Irish pub, no more than half a dozen of us. Ottowa's streets were deserted and we didn't encounter many pedestrians on them. A cold Canadian wind whipped us along

but didn't daunt our enthusiasm.

We had to backtrack once or twice while Mike got his directions sorted out, but we pressed on, with the keen determination of cadaver dogs sedulously tracking down our quarry.

Eventually we walked through the doors of a warm and welcoming Irish pub. There weren't many people in the pub, and we settled into a quiet corner to slake our well-honed thirsts.

After a few rounds of drinks - generously paid for by Mike Hinchey - we headed back out into the inky Ottawa night and retraced our way back to the convention centre. A few steps further and I

was in my hotel. And so to bed, as Samuel Pepys was wont to say.

Ottawa by night

August 12th - Day 2

Saturday was the first full day of the Congress, with an Exhibit Hall open for business. 46 booths were scattered around the hall, as well as a stage and a lounge area.

Each booth was occupied by an IEEE Society or a person conducting tutorials.

Society representatives were handing out brochures and answering questions about the scope and activities of each IEEE society.

Tutorials covered all manner of subjects, such as forming an affinity group, attracting and retaining new members, filling in IEEE forms, and interacting with the IEEE's internal banking system.

Several closed rooms running along the side of the hall were set up as mini-lecture rooms. They had seating for around 40 people, a dais, and a roving microphone for Q&A sessions.

Early in the morning I teamed up with Fouad

Karouta, the Australia Council chair. We were interested in learning about a new pre-university group the IEEE has set up for STEM propagation.

Unfortunately we missed the lecture, so we looked in on the banking booth, where we met Teresa Sacks, its manager. We had a chat with Teresa, who is a delightful person. She gave each of us her card and an assurance that she would help us with any Australia Council banking problems.

After that I wandered around the hall, picking up brochures and branded biros on my jourmey. I discovered IEEE units I'd never heard of before, eg, the Reliability Society, IEEE Reach, the Industry Applications Society, IEEE USA, the Technology & Engineering Society, etc.

One elderly gentleman from Region 4 gave me his card, whereon I learned of SKPL, or **S**cience **K**its for **P**ublic **L**ibraries.

Later I joined Daniel Eghbal from Queensland, who was having a discussion with Maike Luiken, a former Vice-President of MGA. They were discussing the fraught relationship between the IEEE and Engineers Canada. Some things never change.

Wandering through the Exhibit Hall I met Dr Zia Ahmed, former chair of the Australia Council (2017-2018) and webmaster for the Australia Council (2013-2014). Zia and I have exchanged numerous e-mails since I joined the Australia Council, but had never met before.

The person I really wanted to meet and shake hands with was Khanh Luu, who has assisted me over the years with various issues related to IEEE server access. Khanh has been with the IEEE for 23 years, working first in web support, moving up the chain later to be Experience Design manager.

When I found Khanh and introduced myself we both experienced the surreal feeling of old friends meeting for the very first time.

In one of the lecture rooms I listened to Howard Hoffman, Chair of the Life Members Committee, talk about forming Life Member affinity groups.

When the Q&A started I told Howard most of the LMAG information for Australia on IEEE websites was incorrect. Why so, I asked. He said the information will be incorrect if it isn't updated regularly. Good point!

Several delegates were being photographed with IEEE President Saifur Rahman, in a cut-out promoting the IEEE's work for climate change. I joined them and had my photo taken.

MJR with IEEE President Saifur Rahman

Back in the Exhibit Hall I walked this way and that until my head was spinning and I lost my bearings.

A 4-page brochure I picked up at one booth piqued my interest. It was about the proposed realignment of IEEE's ten regions. Regions 1 and 2 are to be amalgamated, while Region 10 will be split into two regions, with China, Japan and Korea in a new Region 10 and the remaining countries, including Australia, in Region 11.

The changes will come into effect on January 1st, 2028. More information is available here.

To my great relief, an announcement came over the public address system saying the Great Hall was the place to be. The afternoon reception and President-Elect Forum were about to start.

In the Great Hall I found a seat at a table with Ewell Tan and Michael Ong, Region 10 secretary. The preliminary proceedings included pep talks from various IEEE luminaries, and a 30-minute talk from guest speaker Laurence Blanford, who gave the SC2023 delegates an update on Canada's climate change legislation.

Laurence Blanford

More pep talks followed before IEEE President Saifur Rahman took the stage and introduced the two candidates for IEEE 2024 President-elect, Kathleen A. Kramer and Roger U. Fujii.

President Rahman with the candidates

After a short background introduction for each candidate, the President put to them a series of questions about their plans for the IEEE under their leadership.

With all questions answered the session concluded. The delegates moved out of the Great Hall and assembled outside for more networking and socialising. Mike Hinchey invited me to join a small group of his friends for drinks at an Ottawa brew-house. Soon we set out on a crepuscular odyssey through Ottawa's deserted streets.

Once again Mike was our *host par excellence*, generously paying for our food and drinks. The evening wasn't as successful as the previous one, probably due to jet-lag on my part, and I got to bed just after midnight. Day two was over. Whew!!!

August 13th - Day 3

The final day started in the Exhibit Hall. Again I mounted the dizzying merry-go-round of visiting booth after booth, looking for anything I may have missed heretofore. Endlessly, or so it seemed, I met people I had met on previous days. Souvenirs were picked up, many hands were shaken, and I promised various people I would be in touch when I returned to Australia.

Shela Cook, the South Australia Section delegate, handed me a bag of Ethics Champion tokens for the Queensland Section. Thank you Shela!

In one of the booths I met Kathleen Kramer, one of the delegates for President-elect. We had a pleasant chat, during which I commented on her left-handedness. She was surprised that I had noticed this and told me so. I told her that in Ireland, where I was born, there is a special word for left-handed people: *ciotóg*, pronounced kit-oowg.

We discussed how left-handed people form about 10% of any population, and how my synapses snap whenever I see a person on TV writing with their left hand. Kathleen thought this a very unusual trait of mine. So do I, but I can't suppress it!

For the first time during the Congress I had lunch

from one of the pop-up food dispensers scattered around the Exhibit Hall. I took my plate of food to a screened-off area at one side of the hall, where I found Andre Oboler already seated.

We discussed plans I had to write a history of the IEEE in Australia and Andre offered to put me in touch with IEEE members in Australia who could provide relevant information. During the meal IEEE President Saifur Rahman took a seat on the opposite side of the large table and ate his lunch. It surprised me that he was dining alone.

At 3:45pm the delegates were ushered back into the main hall for the closing ceremony. Delegates were thanked for their attendance and reminded of the IEEE's commitment to reducing the effects of climate change.

The highlight of the afternoon was keynote speaker Ashley Noseworthy, who spoke about how climate change is affecting the marine environment. Ashley is the CEO of Edgewise Environmental, and a Women in STEM advocate. Her LinkedIn post about speaking at the Sections Congress is here.

Ashley Noseworthy

Ewell Tan

Ewell at SC2023

In a previous life, back in 1960, I was a London bus conductor. I rode the green buses that ferried commuters from rural Surrey north to London's southern suburbs.

One of my bus routes passed through a small town in Surrey named Ewell. When I met Ewell Tan in Ottawa I asked her if there was any connection between her unusual name and the town in Surrey.

Ewell was astonished. How did I know there was a town named Ewell? I told her about the bus stop outside a pub named The Green Man in Ewell. She said she had been to Ewell also, but visited a Hindu temple there. She opened her phone and showed me a photo of the temple.

This was serendipity in action. Two people from different parts of the world, who had never met before, had visited the same hamlet in England and were now attending SC2023. It doesn't get much quirkier than that!

Ewell is a project manager in the IEEE's Singapore office. Her talents are many and her achievements are considerable.

Ewell is a certified senior project manager with the International Association of Project Managers. She is also a certified art instructor with a Diploma in Pastel Nagomi Art.

She graduated with a Masters Degree in International Business from the University of Hertfordshire in England. She has a Bachelor Degree in Financial Studies from a Malaysian university, and has worked at a bank in Singapore.

While studying in England Ewell worked as a warden in the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace. In 2003 she was a primary school teacher, teaching English and mathematics.

In recognition of her stellar IEEE career, Ewell was awarded the Eric Herz Outstanding Staff Member Award in November 2022. A video of her acceptance speech is here.

In her spare time - when does she have spare time? - Ewell mentors under-priviliged children in STEM subjects, and delivers meals to elderly home-bound Singaporeans.

As well as her abundance of talent, Ewell ranks high in pulchritude. She is, as the poet Thomas Gray observed in his famous Elegy in 1751, "*a gem of purest ray serene*".

Summary

The attendance statistics for SC2023 have been published:

- 1096 delegates.
- 303 sections.
- 95 countries.
- 97 speeches.
- 102 R10 delegates.

My personal experience at Sections Congress 2023 was a moment to treasure.

Meeting new friends, meeting IEEE people whose names were known to me though not their faces, listening to inspiring speakers, learning more about the structure of the IEEE, all of these events brought the IEEE to life for me in a way I had not experienced before.

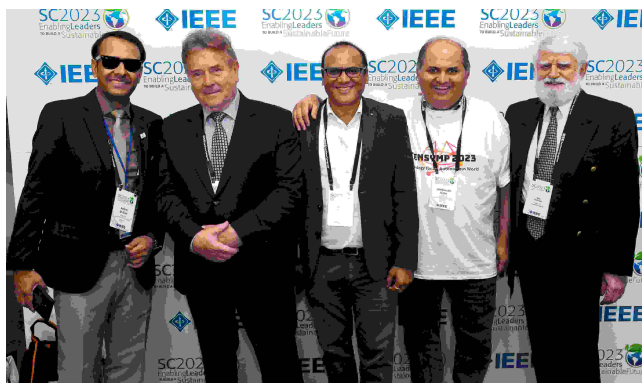Finally, I hope this report conveys a sense of those experiences to my readers.

Photo Gallery

Ewell Tan supports climate change action

Vijay Paul, Annick Boghossian, unknown, MJR, Ewell Tan, unknown, Michael Ong

Siri, what should I wear to the Opening Dinner?

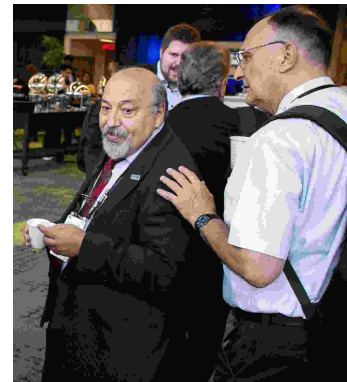*Australian delegates at the Opening Dinner*

Annick Boghossian, Daniel Eghbal, and Kevin Wong
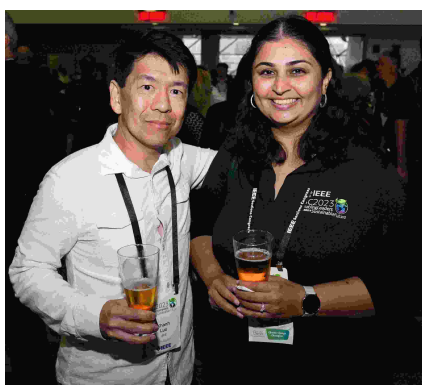

Fred Schindler and Mike Hinchey

Mrs Fung, Lance Fung, Daniel Eghbal, and Harry McDonald

Professor Izzet Kale, unknown

Khanh Luu and friend
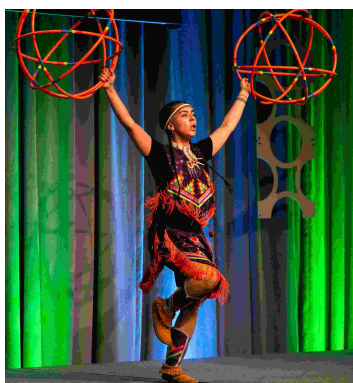

Algonquin dancer

Algonquin dancer

The Shaw Convention Centre in Ottawa

Algonquin dancer

The Exhibit Hall

Farewell to Ottawa!

Sleep and I didn't share the same bed in my room the night before I left Ottawa. Thinking about catching my morning flight weighed heavily on my mind. I was awake when the alarm on my phone rang.

A taxi had been booked to arrive at the hotel at 4am. My flight to Newark, New Jersey left Ottawa at 6:30am. Missing it was out of the question.

A quick shower, a final scan of the room to ensure nothing was left behind, before I descended to the lobby to await my taxi.

Taxi? At 4am in Ottawa? The two propositions are mutually exclusive. What I found instead was Toshio Fukuda and his entourage waiting for their taxi, with enough luggage to fill three taxis.

Toshio and I paced the footpath outside the hotel, hoping to flag down a passing cab. Suddenly two taxis entered the hotel driveway behind us. Toshio commandeered them, leaving me taxiless.

Now an SUV Uber arrived in the hotel driveway. The driver asked me if I was going to the airport. Yes, I replied but I couldn't afford an Uber. The driver said it was free, just put my luggage in the boot and hop in. Turns out the Uber was taking some IEEE grandees to the airport and there was a spare seat in the SUV. Lucky me, indeed!

The Air Canada flight to New Jersey took 90 minutes, landing at 8am. The downside was I had to spend 10 hours in a departure lounge waiting for the next leg of my journey, Newark to Vancouver.

Mentally I bemoaned the missed dental appointment as I paced up and down the departure lounge like a caged animal.

The Air Canada flight to Vancouver took off late and landed late. But worse was to come...

On arrival in Vancouver I saved time by not going through Customs, instead taking a lift straight up to the departure lounge. I arrived at gate 55 with plenty of time to spare, but I didn't realize what Air Canada could do to thwart my cunning plan.

90 minutes after taking a seat at gate 55 Air Canada announced that the flight had been moved to gate 58. What wasn't announced was that the flight scheduled for 11:15pm had been cancelled.

Everyone moved to gate 58 and waited. And waited some more. At 1am Air Canada issued everyone a $25 meal voucher. But all the cafes were closed at that time, except for one place that soon ran out of anything edible, including muesli bars. Thanks for nothing, Air Canada!

At 3am Air Canada announced that our flight to Brisbane was ready for departure. In the meantime Fouad Karouta and Vijay Paul, who had left Ottawa long after I left it, arrived at gate 58.

The flight landed in Brisbane around 7:30am, just inside the time-frame outside of which Air Canada is legally bound to pay compensation for cancelled or delayed flights.

And no, my dentist did not meet me at the airport.

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