

Summary of the WIE Session at 2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD in Dresden

Barbara Obryk, IFJ, Kraków, Poland

The **Women in Engineering** (WIE) Session was held during **2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD** in Dresden for the first time in the history of NSS/MIC Conferences. It took place on Thursday, 23 October 2008, in the evening, and was open to all Conference attendees. The Session, organized by **Barbara Obryk** (IFJ, Poland) and **Maryam Al Thani** (WIE R8 Coordinator), has provided the opportunity to exchange ideas and information on issues of importance, not only to the society of women in science and engineering, but to the general public as well. The theme of the Session was: **“New challenges and opportunities for women scientists and engineers in the world of the Internet Era”**.

At the opening of the Session all attendees were warmly welcomed by **Uwe Bratzler**, the Conference General Chair. He has also passed the greetings to all participants which have been sent by Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany (a physicist by profession).

The WIE Session guests were introduced, among them **Joanna Izewska** of IAEA, **Hannelies Kluge** of DESY, **Jane M. Lehr** of Sandia National Laboratories, **Francesca Nessi-Tedaldi** of ETH Zurich and **Sara A. Pozzi** of the University of Michigan. Presentations have been started with the talk given by Jane Lehr, the NPSS President. It was great that she has shared with the audience her broad experience on combining her scientific work and her dedication to the IEEE activities with her family life, what she has succeeded so well with. Then Hannelies Kluge, who is a founding member of the Working Group for Equal Opportunities of the German Physical Society spoke about the status and best examples of best practice of equal opportunities for female physicists in Germany. Afterwards Sara A. Pozzi led the audience from the discovery of nuclear fission to today's challenges in nuclear energy and nonproliferation with a special emphasis on women contributions to 20th century nuclear physics. Her talk gave Barbara Obryk an opportunity to present a book, edited by Nina Byers and Gary Williams, about contributions of 20th century women to physics, entitled “Out of the Shadows”, which was sent by **Nina Byers** (of UCLA, one of 83 women physicists about whom data is archived on website on “Contributions of 20th Century Women to Physics”) with her best wishes for the participants.

During the panel discussion, which was moderated by Barbara Obryk, Joanna Izewska has shared her broad experience about the situation of women working in international organizations, such as a one she works at and Francesca Nessi-Tedaldi has presented her very personal experience of raising a family with kids without any interruption in scientific and professional career; it has clearly shown that one does not need to choose between career and family and this has given many young women a lot of encouragement. Jane M. Lehr shared with us her opinion which societal factors play a key role in women's choices of a career in physics and she gave us advice on how to be a female scientist and do not obtain the attributes of so-called masculinity. Hannelies Kluge opened before us her vision of development of a culture of equal opportunities in the society while Sara A. Pozzi told us what is the difference in educational situation of girls between Europe and America and compared their way to success on these continents. Sara has also commented on the importance of mentoring in scientific career.

Very lively and interesting informal discussion followed when delicious refreshments were served. Maryam Al Thani (WIE R8 Coordinator) has answered all questions regarding WIE activities and the WIE advertising materials were distributed among participants.

Our WIE Session (<http://spn-nssmic.ifj.edu.pl/wie.html>) was a great success, more than 130 people attended it. We were very glad and impressed that so many men were there, it is great to have a feeling that men are really willing to support women participation in science. We have already received enthusiastic response to our WIE Session from many participants. The outstanding contribution of our speakers (<http://spn-nssmic.ifj.edu.pl/WIEspeakers.pdf>) was all-important to this success.

We have to stress that many members of the Conference Organizing Committee have been of great assistance to us during organization of this Session and we are very grateful to them for that. We want to stress that it would not be possible to propose even an idea of this session without encouragement and support of Uwe Bratzler, the Conference General Chair. We are particularly grateful to him as his strong support has helped us overcome obstacles and has guided us to this success. We would also like to thank Ralf Engels, Ron Keyser and Dora Merelli.

Let us express our deep appreciation for support which our Session received from the Brookhaven National Laboratories and Nuclear and Plasma Sciences Society, without which our idea could not have materialized.

Barbara Obryk has already received encouragement to organize such a session during the NSS/MIC in Orlando next year. She hopes to use the experience that she has gathered this year.



Jane M. Lehr, the NPSS President, speaking at the 2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD WIE Session



Hannelies Kluge of DESY starting her talk at the 2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD WIE Session



Sara A. Pozzi of the University of Michigan speaking at the 2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD WIE Session



Panel discussion during the WIE Session in Dresden (from left to right): Hannelies Kluge (DESY), Jane M. Lehr (Sandia National Laboratories), Joanna Izewska (IAEA), Sara A. Pozzi (University of Michigan), Barbara Obryk (IFJ Krakow, the moderator), Maryam Al Thani (WIE R8 Coordinator), Francesca Nessi-Tedaldi (ETH Zurich)



Barbara Obryk, IFJ Krakow, and Maryam Al Thani, WIE R8 Coordinator, the organizers of the WIE Session at the 2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD in Dresden



The panelists (from left to right): Francesca Nessi-Tedaldi (ETH Zurich), Hannelies Kluge (DESY), Jane M. Lehr (Sandia National Laboratories), Joanna Izewska (IAEA)



Panel discussion during the WIE Session in Dresden (from left to right): Francesca Nessi-Tedaldi (ETH Zurich), Hannelies Kluge (DESY), Jane M. Lehr (Sandia National Laboratories), Joanna Izewska (IAEA), Sara A. Pozzi (University of Michigan), Barbara Obryk (IFJ Krakow, the moderator), Maryam Al Thani (WIE R8 Coordinator)



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The audience of the 2008 IEEE NSS/MIC/RTSD WIE Session in Dresden