

# AMERICAN ENGINEER <sup>TM</sup>

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## Campaign Financing

Congress will have taken up and defeated campaign financing reform by the time you read this, but the issue is systemic of our problems.

As you may recall, the day after signing the H-1b legislation last year, President Clinton made a trip to Silicon Valley to gather his payoff for signing the legislation. Within a few weeks of the president's trip, Newt Gingrich and perhaps other Republicans made the same trek to the valley to gather their spoils.

You will also remember the Chinese scandal and the contributions of the tobacco lobby to the republican's and on and on. Obviously the donations of hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars have not influenced Congress on their decisions. Really?

Could engineer's lack of contributions have contributed to the dearth of engineering organizations who were permitted to express their opinion in hearings?

While I have not spoken out on this subject, and do not claim to have this as an original thought, it is my deeply held belief. Unfortunately, I cannot give credit for the succinct description of how I feel on the subject. It goes like this, "If I can't vote for you, I cannot make contributions to you."

Representative's and senator's should generally make every effort to represent their constituents. Why should a company from New York or China, for example, be permitted to influence a senator or representative from Texas through campaign contributions?

In my opinion, there should also be a dollar limit on how much anyone may contribute. The limit should be set low enough for the average person to be able to contribute the maximum amount.

I don't stand a snowballs chance in hell of meeting with either of my senator's, but I will bet anything I have that all Bill Gates or Ross Perot has to do is call and they will be given whatever time they want.

Is this unfair to either candidate to limit the geographical area from which they may raise funds? Of course not, it

puts all candidates on an even playing field. It would also keep corporations from funding any candidate even though the company may reside in the appropriate geographical area. Corporations can't vote, so they would not be able to contribute. Under this definition, AEA could not contribute, but neither could the unions or religious groups.

This is not an issue of first amendment rights, it is an issue of bribery in my opinion.

Bill Reed, President

## AEA Brings Wooden Stake Award Back

AEA issued several Wooden Stake Awards in the early 1980's. The "award" was given to the individual or organization that had done the most to drive a stake in the heart of the American technical community.

It seems appropriate to bring the award back as we have many candidates who are fully qualified. A few who would have been leading candidates in the past year and a half would include the ITAA, the American Electronics Association, Senator Spencer Abraham, Harris Miller, President of ITAA, the entire Clinton Administration, as well as the Republican leadership.

We do have current candidates for the award. The candidates are Senator Phil Gramm of Texas for introducing his bill (S. 1440) to increase the H-1b cap from 115,000 to 200,000 per year. Representative Zoe Lofgren of California who introduced a bill (H.R. 2687) to open the doors to all foreign students who study science, engineering computer science or mathematics.

A few could be repeat winners of the award. How could we leave out Harris Miller, President of the Information Technology Association of America who is still spreading the misinformation he is noted for? And good ol' Spencer Abraham who has shied away from sponsoring a bill again but has agreed to hold hearings on the Gramm bill.

I think at this time, we must declare duel winners. They are Senator Phil Gramm and Zoe Lofgren. Who will be next? We'll have to wait to see.

## Insurance Survey

The American Engineering Association has been negotiating with a major insurance company to provide health insurance to our members at **group rates**. The company will require a participation rate of about 20% before they will agree to provide the program.

An alternative to the 20% minimum participation is for AEA to provide a base benefit program of term life insurance for every member of the association. (Probably \$5,000 per member.) This alternative will require AEA to sign on for monthly payments of about two dollars per month per member based on total membership. This would require an increase in dues from each member, but will allow us other group programs/benefits.

Potential benefits include **\*Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment \* Dependent Life Insurance \*Hospital Indemnity Benefit \*Additional Accident Benefit \*Employee Disability Weekly Benefit \*Doctor's Office Visit Indemnity \*Outpatient Diagnostic X-Ray and Lab (DXL) Indemnity Benefit \*Surgical Indemnity Benefit \*Preventive Care Indemnity Benefit \*Vision Care Benefit \*Dental Care Benefit \*Prescription Drug Benefit.**

We therefore need to provide answers to the following questions for the insurance company.

1 - Would you participate in an AEA sponsored, **guaranteed issue**, health insurance program with an **A+ rated** company? YES  NO

2 - Would you participate in this program if it could be paid for with pretax dollars? Section 125 of the internal revenue code permits companies to pay for health insurance programs on a **pretax basis**. YES  NO

3 - Are there other programs/benefits you would like for AEA to offer? Explain:

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4 - Would you accept an increase in dues to cover AEA expenses for sponsoring such programs? YES  NO

**Please add your name and current address and E-mail address.** \_\_\_\_\_

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**This information will not be shared with anyone and is only to check/correct our records.**

**Please fill out and send in the survey as soon as possible whether you intend to participate or not. We need a good response to the survey to be meaningful.**

Thanks Bill Reed

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## Ron Graziano Resigns

Ron Graziano has resigned his position as Editor of the American Engineer after about a year in this position. Citing work and family commitments, Ron gave us this statement. "Although, my current commitments with family and work requires that I stop my official capacity with the AEA, please don't be shy asking for my help from time to time."

Ron has helped out in various unofficial capacities for several years before he took on the editor's job. He did a great job in everything he did for us.

Thanks for your help Ron, we will miss you.

**HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY  
SEASON AND A VERY  
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!**

## INS Screws Up Again

The Immigration and Naturalization Service has admitted to issuing thousands of H-1b visas above the cap.

INS estimated they issued from ten thousand to twenty thousand H-1b visas above the statutory limit of 115,000. In addition, they admitted they did not know how many H-1b visas had been issued.

This is apparently not a new thing with INS as they have indicated the 1998 total exceeded the 65,000 by some 19,000.

Computerworld reports the 1998 overrun of 19,000 were applied to the 1999 cap.

Industry, of course does not want to apply the 1999 overrun to the 2000 limits.

Computerworld quotes our old friend Harris Miller, President of the ITAA, the Information Technology Association of America with the following threat.

"If they made a mistake and punish companies for it this year, that will generate heat..... The INS should grant the full complement of 115,000 new H-1b visas and not deduct its 1999 error from 2000's limit, he said."

As we have always said, industry will not be satisfied until they have full access to any and all workers from anywhere in the world.

## Readers Voice

Keep telling it like it is. I worked at Raytheon in Mass in 1986. During that time they brought engr. from England over claiming a shortage. They took work from the USA engr. in my area and gave it to them.

About 1 or 2 years later when the defense market dropped they laid off USA engr. but didn't fire any imports in my area. The imports were normal engr. with no special skills. M.R. Pa.

Please find enclosed my check for \$30. for one year's membership in AEA. I have worked in the aerospace industry for about forty years and have witnessed gross mismanagement of engineering resources many, many times. Vital projects today are in trouble because competent staff has been forced out of the profession by callous management practices. No H-1b replacements can possibly do the job that seasoned American professionals can.

H.D. Ph.D. AI.

Due to my upcoming retirement in a few months, I will not be renewing my membership in the AEA, and I respectfully request that I be removed from your mailing list. However, I am enclosing another contribution to your \$5,000 challenge and wish you and your associates all the best in the future.

I have always been proud to have met Irwin Feerst, and to have been a supporter of his until his too early death. He set many standards for us, and I am pleased to have supported his successor, the AEA. (Ed Note - The contribution was for \$100.00)

R.D. Ky

## Richard Estrada Dies

Richard Estrada, a Dallas Morning News columnist since 1988, is dead at the age of 49. He apparently died of a massive heart attack.

Richard was well known in immigration circles. In 1992 Richard was appointed to the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform chaired by Rep. Barbara Jordan of Houston.

He served on the staff of Rep. Ronald D. Coleman in the early 1980's and worked with the Federation for American Immigration Reform (Fair) and the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) in the mid 1980's.

I first met Richard while he was working with FAIR in the mid 1980's. While not really close to Richard, we maintained contact until the present. Richard was always helpful to AEA by offering advice as well as ensuring our views were presented to the Commission on Immigration Reform.

Richard understood the problems of the engineering community and had written several columns concerning the importing of technical workers. Richard's latest article relating to foreign technical workers ran on 9/10/99 in the Dallas Morning News and was very positive from the American engineers point of view.

From a personal point of view, I always thought of Richard as a friend. From my observations that seemed to be the case with everyone met him. Richard was a very bright individual who, though very well educated, was willing to listen to anyone's views. He was as comfortable with those in power as he was with the poorest immigrant.

Forty-nine years is far too few for a person of Richard's personality, ability and talent. We will miss you Richard.

Bill Reed, President

## AEA and the Engineering Community need your help.

We need the support and participation of all members of the engineering community if AEA is going to succeed in the fight for a better profession. There are 2 million engineers working in the U.S. today. How many are unemployed or under employed is hard to measure. Five (5%) percent of these employed engineers can make a difference between the success and failure of AEA. You can make a difference.

Please don't leave this to the other engineer. Remember, to all other engineers, you are the other engineer. Help AEA bring the fight to Washington. No one else is going to help you and AEA will make things happen.

I want to enhance my career and help the AEA.

Please enter my application and add my support to AEA's fight.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$30.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Citizen: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Engineering Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_ Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose check or money order to: AEA, BOX 820473 Fort Worth, Texas 76182-0473

Your Congressional Representative (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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