

## AN IRON RING MYTH

Re: "Putting some engineering myths to rest," *Engineering Dimensions*, September/October 2013, p. 34, Mr. Mastromatteo's article needs correction with regard to "Myth: An iron ring makes you an engineer."

Contrary to the article's assertion, the iron ring does not mean the wearer is a graduate of a Canadian engineering program. I am personally aware of a number of immigrants and Canadians that did not graduate from a Canadian university, who applied to the Camp Warden to be able to take part in the Ritual of the Calling of an Engineer (written by Rudyard Kipling). These people had achieved certification as professional engineers by accreditation of educational and professional experience and/or the passing of required exams, not by graduating from a Canadian university.

My point is that the iron ring, worn on the small finger of the working hand, has a copyright and signifies the person wearing it has taken part in the ritual and taken the oath. Invitation to take part in the ritual is extended to all Canadian university engineering students about to graduate. Anyone in the practice of engineering in Canada not invited through their university "camp" can gain the right to wear the iron ring by applying to the camp to be admitted to the ritual ceremony and taking the oath.

Elio Comello, P.Eng., Camlachie, ON



## COOL IT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

I am getting tired of hearing from climate change evangelists that anyone who does not agree with them is a heretic. I use the term "evangelist" because, although they claim global warming is science and not a religion, they defeat their own argument with the use of the religious term "heretic."

Science is not a democracy. There was a time when the vast majority of scientists thought the world was flat. Fortunately, we did not take a vote. When approximately 20 per cent of scientists today are not sure that humans even cause so-called climate change, let alone believe whether today's climate is even significantly different from other times in history, it is absurd to argue the "debate is over."

Seeing as proponents of human-caused climate change like to cite facts, let us get a few straight:

- Earth's average temperature has been steady for the past 15 years. Proponents talk about taking a break but scientific principles are at play all the time. Newton never found a break when gravity did not cause apples to fall;
- In the middle of the last century, we saw a period of temperature records that mirror what we are seeing today;
- CO<sub>2</sub> is needed for life and is not a pollutant;
- Many of the same proponents of climate change today were the same people who were worried about global cooling in the 1970s;
- Although there may be some disagreement on whether the ice at the North Pole is diminishing, there is no argument that ice levels are not changing at the South Pole;
- The polar ice caps on Mars are getting smaller and there are no humans up there;
- Deep water buoys have not shown any increase in ocean temperatures for the 50 years they have been measuring it; and
- There has never been a scientific link between severe weather and CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

When mathematical models do not coincide with actual data, you cannot ignore the data; rather, you must revisit the model. Interestingly enough, it was Arnold Schwarzenegger, when governor of California, who said he was not a scientist and did not know which side was right. He did not want to wait to find out in case it was too late, but did not want to waste money solving a problem that might not exist. His solution was to allocate resources that would have a beneficial effect regardless of which side was right. For example, he supported emission controls on motor vehicles. He reasoned if automobile exhausts were causing climate change, reducing emissions would be good. On the other hand, if they were not, the money would still be well spent as reduced emissions would produce cleaner air to breathe.

Engineers, as scientists, should certainly take part in the debate, but to say the debate is over is irresponsible and certainly not scientific. Maybe Arnold Schwarzenegger's approach is the right one when addressing allocation of society's resources.

Rick Ross, P.Eng., Toronto, ON

# LETTERS



## AN ECONOMICAL PROBLEM

This refers to the article “Climate change, sustainable infrastructure and the challenges facing engineers” by Kean Birch, PhD, and Dalton Wudrich.

Several points raised therein should be considered by engineers and would, if incorporated into designs and construction, reduce the rate at which carbon dioxide and other pollutants enter the atmosphere. As a profession, we could issue specific guidelines, such as: all new projects should be rated by how much they increase the production of fish, ducks and other wild-life. There are many engineering-specific actions that a dedicated profession can and will incorporate into its future actions since we are, at heart, a conservative oriented group and always try to obtain the most reward for the least amount of energy expenditure.

A big obstacle to thinking about pollution reduction is the way the world economy is structured. There is no monetary reward for saving wetlands, forests, fish, glaciers and other natural treasures. There is a large reward for destroying agricultural land, seacoasts, lakes and rivers, coastal lands and numerous other items that could help with reducing the amount of harmful items in our air, water and land. The engineering profession needs help from an economist and a few courageous politicians and country leaders, otherwise engineers alone are not going to solve the problem. E.R. Trask, P.Eng., Cornwall, ON

## IN NEED OF STUDY

Re: September/October 2013 issue, two of the three letters published [on climate change] appear to be from engineers working in the field and could therefore be biased. Remember Y2K and the scare tactics used then? My company, as did many others, spent millions on this and we all know what a hoax that was! Did any engineers come out (in the months before) and say so?

One of the letters was using ethics as a reason for engineers to avoid certain types of work. I honestly do find that extreme. These letters and the now-infamous emails a couple of years back lead me to believe this topic deserves a lot of study before jumping to conclusions and adversely affecting our economy and livelihood.

Ken Dias, P.Eng., MBA, Scarborough, ON

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