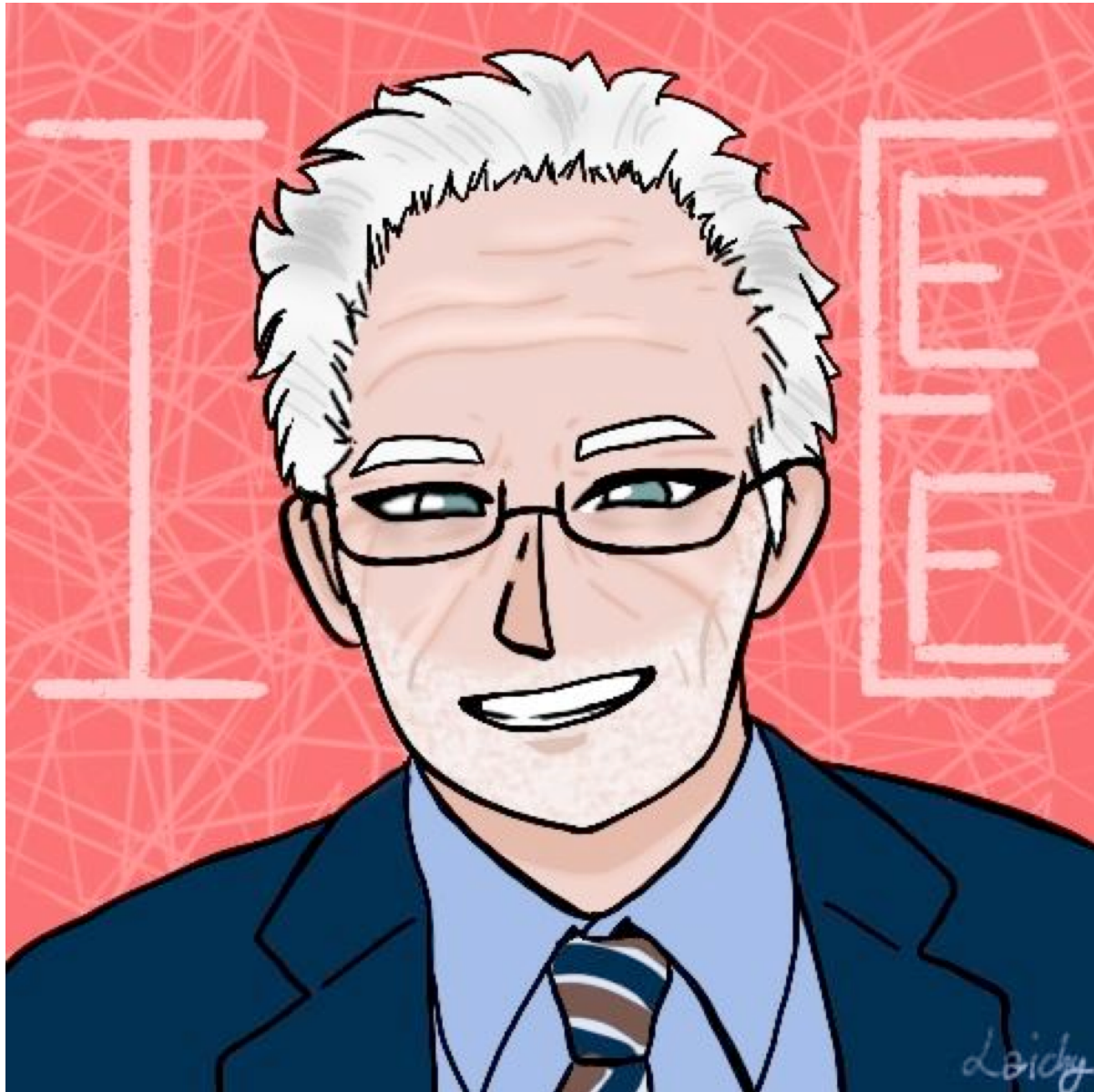


Imagine the Future



Imagine

Join me in discussing the future of the IEEE at our next town meeting. You can register for this event at: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sU8igXtjQsCdTDYYz_ADbQ
You can see my other IEEE PE campaign blogs and other materials at: <https://tomcoughlin.com/ieee>.

I grew up reading science fiction (SciFi), and although some fantasy-oriented content also interested me, I was and continue to be, a big fan of hard science fiction. Back in college I was involved in local SciFi fan groups in Minneapolis, helped start an L5 chapter (of Gerard O'Neill's L5 Society) and even published my own fanzine for a while.

I went to several local and World Science Fiction Conventions (in the 1970's and 1980's and even went to a few of SciFi Bay area SciFi and space development events in the last few years). I had the opportunity to meet (or at least watch and listen to) Robert Heinlein, Harlan Ellison, Isaac Asimov, Frederick Pohl and others big names in Science Fiction at the time. These writers and the concepts they explored in their fiction were, and continue to be, a source of inspiration for me.

The work of these and other SciFi authors inspired me to want to understand the physical sciences and to learn how to use natural laws and logic to make things. As a young man I dreamed of going into outer space to explore new worlds, discover new things, develop extra-terrestrial resources and perhaps even discover new life, maybe even intelligent beings different from ourselves.

At the time, in the 1960's and 1970's, humans were making their first incursions to near earth orbit, exploring the planets and even landing and exploring the moon. Unfortunately, the pace of development in outer space slowed and the driving dreams became much less ambitious from the 1980's on (except for a few die-hard space enthusiasts who continued to develop concepts for going to and living in outer space), until just a few years ago.

Then came Richard Branson, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos who had the dream and the money to support the development of private space programs. Thanks to the work of these people and those who never gave up on the promise of new worlds, there is a renewed spirit of adventure and physical exploration that could accomplish great things and even help alleviate some of Earth's biggest problems and concerns. To remain relevant, IEEE needs to engage in the development of outer space and other great and inspiring dreams for how technology can benefit and advance mankind.

In my next two campaign blogs and in an upcoming town hall meeting I want us to imagine the future of the IEEE. I will talk about various efforts in the IEEE to create the future (such as our Future Directions Committee activities), the New Initiatives Committee and how IEEE section local groups can play a part in bringing IEEE into the future. I want to hear about your ideas about how IEEE can continue to discover and be engaged in the big technology developments that can make the world better and provide outstanding opportunities for our global membership. **Imagine the future of the IEEE.**