Author Note: This profile was featured in the INCOSE newsletter as part of the ongoing INCOSE Spotlight series.

INCOSE Spotlight on Ginny Lentz
Interviewed by Sandy Young, info@incose.org

Name: Ginny Lentz
Title: Systems and Programs Technologist
Organization: IBM Federal Systems Division, Lockheed Martin and United Technologies Corporation

Place of Birth: LaPorte, Indiana, USA
Current Residence: Cary, North Carolina, USA

Domain: Defense, Aerospace, Transportation
Studied in college: Mathematics
Year joined INCOSE: 1991
Roles in INCOSE: Founder, Nominations and Elections Committee, Past President (1996), 1st Chair Corporate Advisory Board (CAB), 1st Chair Events Committee, Co-Chair of the first Academic Workshop
Years in systems engineering: 45

1. Why did you become a systems engineer?
   There was a job to be done, and I did it. Later we called it systems engineering. It was challenging, and we were building unprecedented, computer-based systems so there was always something new to learn. I was frequently in the middle of a triangle between the program manager, the customer and the chief engineer. The best part is that systems engineering is all about making things useful.

2. What project or accomplishment are you most proud of in your systems engineer career?
   I consider GPS (Global Positioning System) to be my legacy system. As the systems engineering manager on the Control Segment I chaired the system-wide Interface Control Working Group. GPS is a system with many unintended civilian applications, and I love collecting stories from all kinds of users.

3. How has INCOSE changed since you were president in 1996?
   The global breadth is the same. More countries are involved now and with increasing memberships. In 1996 we felt that if commercial programs knew about systems engineering, they would adopt it as is … that's about the time I left defense and aerospace for more commercial organizations to get a dose of reality. We are still trying to understand that new reality and its many variations. The good news is that processes are codified, we have the SE Handbook, the evolving Systems Engineering Body of Knowledge (SEBoK), we are certifying systems engineers and we are moving to model based systems engineering (MBSE).

4. Describe the ideal INCOSE board candidate.

A leader with broad spectrum systems engineering experience. One who represents typical SEs on current programs and brings their needs to INCOSE. A curious and intuitive person that is comfortable with ambiguity, and confrontation. A lifelong learner and one who can get quickly to the bottom line of any discussion and work with the others to resolve items for the common good. A good connector … a catalyst for change … One who is sufficiently self-assured to not let their ego get in the way of getting the board of directors' job done.