

Won't Anybody Let a Girl Design Just One Tiny Bridge?

By REX POLIER

Of The Bulletin Staff

The going is a bit rough for women trying to crack the engineering profession, long a male stronghold.

You can take this from Alma Kuppinger, 24, of 6511 N. 9th st., a graduate civil engineer.

For the last two years, the brown-haired miss has been wanting to design bridges, the way she learned at Drexel Institute of Technology.

But, she said yesterday, some male engineering graybeards won't let a woman planner get close to their blueprints. They let them do all sorts of supplementary things, but no sir, not one little bridge will they let them design.

Society Founded Here

Alma is one of the eight women ever to be graduated from Drexel as engineers—all since World War II, which encouraged women to eye the profession in the first place. She was the first woman at the school to receive a degree in civil engineering.

She is also a nominee for the presidency of the Philadelphia chapter, Society of Women Engineers, which is holding its annual election today at the Bellevue-Stratford.

The society was founded here by a group of girls at Drexel who got together with some New York City girls. It now has seven chapters throughout the country.

Just as women had completed their engineering education and were making for the drawing boards, the war ended and male engineers flocked back like ducks returning North in the spring.

Sees Better Times

Since her graduation, Alma said, she has held various jobs in the engineering field, all of them satisfactory, but none as a full-fledged engineer. She blamed the lack of opportunities generally on the fact



Alma Kuppinger

that she's a woman.

"Chances for women engineers are almost nil in an old established concern, mainly because they've never considered them. Chances are a little better if it is a new concern."

Maybe, she ventured, now that the country is building up its defenses, the outlook for gal designers and planners will be better.

35 in Society Chapter

Whatever happens, Alma still thinks there's no profession like engineering and is confident that she and her sisters in the profession will some day be recognized, as women are in others.

The Philadelphia chapter of the society has about 35 members. Not all are engineers, but all either work or are studying in the engineering field.

Miss Doris McNulty, of 1823 E. Pastorius st., a student at Temple University, is Alma's opposition in the election.

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