



Society of
Women Engineers

ASPIRE • ADVANCE • ACHIEVE

December 2007 Newsletter

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Managing Your Life Records

by Ginger Atwood (from www.swe.org)

Common Sense work principles need to extend to all aspects of life. It is important to take the time to periodically verify that your important life records are accurate. Consider the following tips:

- Re-verify any information that may have been manually converted from paper records to computer records in the past few years.
- Check your social security records periodically for accuracy.
- Double-check your mortgage company,s escrow records against your own.
- Pay close attention to charge card records.
- Check your medical benefits before accepting a denial of claim or making additional payments to a doctor.
- Check your pension records and know how they are calculated.
- Check your insurance to make sure that your actual coverage is correct.
- Check your investments and pensions to ensure that the correct beneficiaries are identified.

The following examples illustrate the importance of applying these tips.

Computerized Records

Recently, my application to take the Professional Engineering exam was rejected because they were told that I did not have an Engineering degree. Although I had taken the standard precaution of checking my transcript for accuracy after graduation, my University had converted from paper record to computer record at some time in the last 20 years. The University made a keying error that assigned the wrong degree code so that sometime in the last two decades my BS turned into a BA.

Once the problem was identified, I was able to get it corrected immediately. However, I have to wonder if this misinformation affected my career over the last few years when I supplied sealed transcripts for jobs, graduate school, etc. Take the time to re-verify any important personal information that has been manually converted from paper records to computer records. Any institutional records created before the mid-1980s are highly likely to have been manually converted to database form.

(Continued page 7)

Message from the President



Happy Holidays!

Our Section celebrated the Holiday Season in late November at Pasta Amore in Omaha. We had great food and everyone (including spouses!) left with a gift! I would like to thank Janis Pfingsten for planning a wonderful evening!

We are halfway through the SWE fiscal year and are looking forward upcoming months filled with community involvement activities, technical presentations, personal growth and leadership opportunities, E-Week, and social events.

We are planning a Work/Life Balance topic for our January meeting. Stay tuned for details!

With the committees that we have in place at our Section, there is room for everyone to be involved in at any level of commitment. Please feel free to call me and discuss your interests and how you would like to be involved in the Section. Our next officer meeting is Tuesday January 8, 2007 at Kleinfelder, 9312 G Court, Omaha, NE 68127 at 5:30 pm. You are welcome to sit on the meeting. If you would like to hold an office but not sure what that entails, please feel free to contact me or any of the officers and we will be happy to share our experience in that office with you. We also have a Conference Line that some of the officers outside Omaha use to dial in and participate. Let me know if you are interested in attending the meeting and I will count you in on the Pizza!!

Hope you all have a great Holiday Season and a wonderful New Year with your family and friends. Stay warm and be safe!

Without your input and participation, our Section will not grow!

Respectfully,
Lara Syrocki, P.E.
President – SWE Eastern Nebraska Section

***Happiness is a place between too little and too
much***

– Finnish proverb

Save the Date!

ANNUAL E-WEEK BANQUET THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2008

Topic: Google & their \$300 million data center facility in Council Bluffs, IA, which is described as a critical part of their business expansion.

Sponsored by the Engineer's Roundtable

0.1 Continuing Education Units (CEU) or
1.0 Professional Development Hours (PDH) available

Banquet Location:

Cascio's Steak House
1620 South 10th Street

Time:

6:00 PM – Social Hour (Cash Bar)
7:00 PM – Banquet & Speaker

Dinner Selections & Prices:

Entrée Choices:

Rib Eye Steak
Boneless Chicken Breast
Grilled Halibut

(All dinner selections include a salad, baked potato, bread, vegetable coffee or tea, and dessert)

**LOOK FOR THE SIGN-UP
FLYER WITH ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION SOON!**

**Engineers Roundtable website:
<http://www.eroundtable.unomaha.edu>**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Next Meeting



Thursday, January 24 at 6:00 p.m.
Restaurant: **Taste** in Rockbrook Village
11036 Elm St.

We will order from the menu that evening.

Topic: Family/Life Balance

The holidays will be over and we all will hopefully be back to a little less hectic lifestyle in January. In order to help us make our lives a little less chaotic, we have arranged for a speaker to come and give us some useful ideas and tips. We will learn how to better organize our lives, how to get our mornings a little less hectic, give us some meal planning/shopping strategies, etc.

Upcoming Meetings

February 21 – EWEEK Banquet
March – Joint meeting with ASCE
Regional Conference

Professional Development Committee **Forming**

As professionals, our job not only requires us to work hard and get our tasks done, but it also includes developing our skills technically and personally. Our section is trying to aid in this development as much as possible by setting up presentations and speakers and by making sure you are aware of other events. To do this we need individuals who are willing to serve on the Professional Development Committee. We know everyone is busy, so the level of commitment will be as minimal as possible to meet our goals.

If you are interested in joining this committee or would like to know more, contact the section President, Lara Syrocki, at president@swe-nebraska.org.

Region I Conference 2008 in Boulder, Colorado February 29 – March 1, 2008

Each year about 250 people across Wyoming, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Oklahoma, and part of Illinois get together for the Region I Conference in Boulder, Colorado. This conference is a great opportunity for both SWE and non-SWE members to get together and celebrate the idea of being an engineer! The conference starts on Friday evening, February 29th with entertainment by a tarot card reader, a magician, and more, February 29th and goes all day on Saturday, March 1.

The registration cost for the conference is \$75 for SWE members and \$100 for non-SWE members. This cost includes a ticket to the Boulder Dinner Theatre to see “Little Shop of Horrors”. After January 25, prices will increase by \$15 (and you may not get a seat at the dinner theatre), so if you would like to attend, get your registrations in soon.

To register, and for more information on the speakers, hotel accommodations, and the schedule, visit www.cuswe.camp7.org. If you have never attended a conference, or if it has been a long time, you should come. It is a great time to visit other engineers from our region and enjoy a weekend in Colorado.

If you are interested in carpooling to Colorado, (an 8 hour drive), contact Janis Pflingsten.

If you have any ideas for topics of meetings or other suggestions or know of another organization’s meeting that would be of interest to the section, please email SWE_Planning@swe-nebraska.org.



Happy Holidays!!

Region I Conference

Region I Leap Year

SWE Regional Conference

February 29-March 1 * University of Colorado at Boulder Campus



Pre-Registration is open!
Register early and save \$15!



Superstition?

No way ... I'm an engineer!

Superstition (soo'per-stish'en) n. A belief, practice, or rite irrationally maintained by ignorance of the laws of nature or by faith in magic or chance. A fearful or abject state of mind resulting from such ignorance or irrationality.

Join the Society of Women Engineers for two days of exciting, informative, and fun sessions focused on:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Networking | Personal Growth | Career Development |
| Financial Freedom | Engineering Exploration | Work/Life Balance |
| Goal-Setting | Nutrition and Fitness | and More! |

Featured presenters include

- Dave Klaus, CU Professor - Mock Lunar Living Module
- Heather Doty, Ball Aerospace - Next Generation Telescope
- Mike Brandameuhl, CU Professor - The Power of Sun: Solar Decathlon
- Jen Ross, Yoga Instructor - Sunrise Yoga

Pre-Register Aug. 15 - Dec. 15 and save!

- View schedule and register online at www.cuswe.camp7.org
- SWE Members: Collegiate - \$45, Professional - \$75
- Non-SWE Members: Collegiate - \$50, Professional - \$100
- Women and men welcome! Prices will increase after Dec. 15.

Official Conference Hotel: Boulder Outlook Hotel

- Call early to reserve your room in this zero-waste hotel! (800) 542-0304
- Standard room including buffet breakfast - \$69 (Say you're with SWE!)

Visit www.cuswe.camp7.org for registration and complete details

Pre-Registration deadline extended!!!!

Early Bird Fee expires January 25th

It's Never too Early to Start Planning

WOW! That's Engineering was a great success this year and we hope to make it even better for 2008. To get a head start on the 2008 event, we will have our first planning meeting in January. With an event such as this, there is plenty of planning and tasks to be done.

Anyone interested in helping out with the planning for next year's event, should join the WOW! Committee. There is a wide range of tasks that go into this event, so if you think you don't have something to offer the committee, you are wrong. You don't have to be a member to join the committee. All help is good help.

If you are interested in joining this committee or would like to know more, contact Amanda Stahlnecker at newsletter@swe-nebraska.org.

Stay Tuned for more information about the upcoming Planning Meeting!

NOTEWORTHY NEWS

URS hosted UNO SWE Chapter

URS hosted a luncheon presentation for the SWE Chapter at UNO on November 26, 2007. The presentation included a company profile and also highlighted a few URS-Omaha projects. Approximately 10% of the engineers who work for URS are women. The students left with a better understanding of who URS is and the opportunities a career with URS would provide, either locally or in one of their 300 offices located worldwide

INFORMATION TO SHARE

We always welcome articles of interest or tidbits of news from our newsletter recipients. If you have something you would like to see in the next newsletter, contact Amanda Stahlnecker at newsletter@swe-nebraska.org.

LADY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Susan Randall

Utility Engineering - Omaha, NE



As a new recruit to the SWE Eastern Nebraska Section, I was asked to be the subject of the column this month. My name is Susan Randall, and I am a professional engineer.

I entered Kansas State University's Chemical Engineering program when I was 38 years old and graduated in 1999. For the last seven years I have been working as a Mechanical Design Engineer for *Utility Engineering*. The day to day work involves pump and pipe design, specifying valves, and writing equipment specification. I've recently completed a three year term on the ASME Nebraska Section volunteer steering committee. Hence, I'm looking forward to a more passive roll with SWE.

However, I'm all too familiar with challenges in running a professional society section and publishing its newsletter. The small membership pool may make it easy for social gatherings but the need for contributions falls to fewer members. But I've learned that involvement is key to a meaningful experience in any professional society. The investment of money from membership fees will not garner contacts or visibility a professional society offers without in-depth involvement. So I'm making a commitment to attend SWE functions regularly.

Attending SWE meetings promises to be fun and networking is career enriching. What Luck! This is the time of year to make resolutions – both personal and professional. My professional goals for 2008 are to make a professional presentation and pursue leadership roles on projects. I am confident SWE resources will help me obtain my goals by attending speaker presentation, seminars and networking. The performance review cycle will start right after New Years and I am all set with my SWE membership.

I appreciate the opportunity to introduce myself to our membership at large and look forward to meeting other professionals in engineering.

UNO Update

<http://www.unomaha.edu/swe>

To see what the UNO section is up to, visit their website.

Seeking an ArchE internship

Jamie Tills is currently searching for an internship. She is studying Architectural Engineering and is an officer for the UNO SWE Section. If you know of any internship opportunities for Jamie, she can be reached at jtills@mail.unomaha.edu

UNL UPDATE

<http://swe.unl.edu/>

To see what the UNL section is up to, visit their website.

Stay warm and Enjoy the snow!



LOCAL JOB POSTINGS

To post local engineering or engineering related jobs please contact our SWE section at president@swe-nebraska.org.



For more information about the section's activities, please visit our website at

www.swe-nebraska.org



Managing Your Life Records

(Continued from page 1)

Social Security

My husband checked his social security records and found that a past employer had not paid his social security tax for over a year. We had to send the original W2,s to Social Security because they were so old that they were too faded to copy. The problem was eventually corrected. I also recently discovered that the total social security withholding shown on my last check from my previous employer was less than the sum of the monthly social security withholdings for the year. Check your social security records periodically for accuracy periodically to find out what was actually paid and match the withholding on your check to what was reported on your W2.

Escrow Accounts

My mortgage company was charging a late fee to my account every time I made a payment before the first of the month since they erroneously believed that the checks were for the previous month (even though they were correctly labeled). This particular company was also paying my taxes late and charging the escrow account for the late fee. When I made extra payments on the mortgage, this same company applied it to the escrow account rather than to the principle. While this company got into trouble with these practices. It is smart to double-check your mortgage company to make sure that your payments and escrow account are being handled appropriately.

Charge Card Payments

A few months ago I noticed that the amount credited for my charge card payment and taken from my bank account was different from the amount on my payment check. This underpayment triggered interest and

penalties. Most major credit card payments made by check are processed through the credit card company not your bank. If there is an error, you are the only one who will be able to catch it and get it corrected.

Medical Benefits

Last year, I had several medical claims denied that were covered according to my medical plan. They were all paid in full after I showed evidence of coverage from the plan. I also had doctors who were paid in full send me bills for additional charges in hopes that I would pay them without checking. Check your medical benefits before accepting a denial of claim or making additional payments to a doctor.

Pension Records

Check your pension records to make sure that they are correct. Know how your pension is calculated. I have a friend that found that his time of service after a lengthy career was recorded as a year and a half short of his actual service. He also found that his salary of record reported was lower than his actual salary. After investigation, he discovered that his employer did not count the amounts put into his 401k as income. He found that he was better off not making 401k contributions for the last three years before his retirement. Luckily he discovered these issues and had them corrected before he retired.

Insurance Coverage

For the last few years, I have had a running battle with my insurance company. The same company also covers my in-laws and about once a year, I have to get corrections made to my policies. For example, I continually find my father-in-law listed as a driver on my car policy even though he has his own car, his own policy, and his own address. I also find that changes that they make to their policies periodically creep onto my policies.

Beneficiary Check

For any investments, life insurance policies, pensions, etc. Periodically check your beneficiary of record. My father recently found out that the school district he works for had a person that he did not even know listed as his beneficiary. If something had happened to him before this error was discovered, it could have significantly delayed receipt of needed benefits.

Consider taking the following actions to verify the accuracy of important life records.

- Re-verify any information that may have been manually converted from paper records to computer records in the past few years.
- Check your social security records periodically for accuracy.
- Double check your mortgage company,s records against your own.
- Pay close attention to your charge card records.
- Check your medical benefits before accepting a denial of claim or making additional payments to a doctor.
- Check your pension records and know how they are calculated.
- Check your insurance to make sure that your actual coverage is correct.
- Check your investments and pensions to ensure that the correct beneficiaries are identified.

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