



Society of
Women Engineers

ASPIRE • ADVANCE • ACHIEVE

Section Officers:

President

Lara Syrocki, P.E.
president@swe-nebraska.org

Vice President

Angel McMullen-Gunn
vice_president@swe-nebraska.org

Council of Sections Representative

Amanda Stahlnecker
COR-rep@swe-nebraska.org

Treasurer

Janet Doan, P.E.
treasurer@swe-nebraska.org

Secretary

Jo Whitaker
secretary@swe-nebraska.org

Newsletter Editor/Webmanager

Amanda Stahlnecker
newsletter@swe-nebraska.org
webmanager@swe-nebraska.org

Membership Chair

Janis Pfungsten
membership@swe-nebraska.org

WOW! Event Chair

Elizabeth Hunter, P.E.
wow_event@swe-nebraska.org

Career Guidance Chair

Aarthi Parthasarthy
Career_guidance@swe-nebraska.org

UNO Student Section Counselor

Lara Syrocki, P.E.
UNO_Counselor@swe-nebraska.org

UNL Student Section Counselor

Angel McMullen-Gunn
UNL_Counselor@swe-nebraska.org

Engineering Roundtable

Elizabeth Hunter
EAHunter@leodaly.com

November 2007 Newsletter

"Girl Scouts - Engineering the Future" with the Eastern Nebraska Section of the SWE

Our chapter, with the York Girl Scout Service Unit 601, hosted "Girl Scouts - Engineering the Future" Day on Saturday, October 20, 2007. The day was targeted for girls ages 10 and up, from the Homestead Girls Scout Council. Approximately 40 girls from the communities of York, Unadilla, Hooper, McCool Junction, Lincoln, Seward, and Malcolm participated in the event. The event provided an opportunity for scouts to see firsthand how fantastic science and engineering is, by working with professional SWE members who work in local technological industries. Junior Girl Scouts participating in the day's activities earned their Discovering Technology Badge, while Studio 2B Girl Scouts earned their Inventions & Inquiry IP. "I believe that the more we can show girls at an early age how fun and exciting the field of engineering can be, the more girls will grasp the understanding that they can truly be anything they want to be. By partnering with local industry and the SWE organization, it was a great day for all who participated", said Pam Hakl, Girl Scout Leader/Event Coordinator. "We are very excited to have had this opportunity for our girls!"

The morning sessions were comprised of professional female engineers and technicians discussing their careers; along with hands-on activities to introduce the young women to engineering and science related careers. Hands-on activities included "Gumdrop Domes: Candied Civil Engineering" conducted by NE SWE Newsletter Editor/Webmanager Amanda Stahlnecker, a Railroad Project Engineer for HDR, Omaha and assisted by Membership Chair Janis Pfungsten; "Balloon Rocket Racers," led by NE SWE VP and Hamilton Sundstrand Mechanical Engineer, Angel McMullen-Gunn; as well as "The Chemistry of Milk," led by NE SWE Secretary, Jo Whitaker, a Validation Engineer for Schering-Plough Animal Health Corporation in Elkhorn with Kathy Galaway, Hamilton Sundstrand York, Senior Quality Materials Technician. The afternoon was a full blown "Invention Session" where the girls actively invented and created models of their own designs that they presented to adults in attendance. Inventions created by the scouts included safer bridges, improvements to the interior of cars, environmentally-friendly night lights, and recycling gardens. The creativity and detail of all projects was absolutely outstanding! The positive feedback from scouts, leaders and parents alike has confirmed the success of this event; plans for next year's event are already in the works, confirmed the Engineering Coordinator for the Event, Angel McMullen-Gunn.

Message from the President

First, I would like to thank those of you who were able to join us at our October Professional Development Meeting in Lincoln. Special thanks go to Angel McMullen-Gunn, Section Vice-President and UNL Student Counselor, who planned the meeting and presented a great seminar on Communication. I would like to also thank the members of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) for their participation in our meeting. The October meeting focused on effective communication and how we use our verbal and nonverbal language.



In a spoken message, 55% of the meaning is translated non-verbally, 38% is indicated by the tone of voice, while only 7% is conveyed by the words used (Mehrabian, 1981). The next time you are in a conversation with your coworker, supervisor, client, or a family member, think of your verbal and non-verbal language. Are you telling your supervisor that you can handle the deadline while your tone of voice changes and clearly indicates that you are upset! Are you telling your husband that it is okay to go golfing on Saturday while you put your hands in the air and walk away?

One of the most important communication tools is listening. Effective listening occurs when there is a high degree of correspondence between the sender's original message and the listener's recreation of that message (Castleberry & Shepherd). I came across HighGain website which offers a free test to assess your listening skills. How well do you "effectively" listen? <http://www.highgain.com/SELF/index.php>.

Our Section will be planning a Professional Development Workshop in the spring of 2008, if you are interested in joining the Professional Development Committee to plan this event and future events please email me at president@swe-nebraska.org.

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

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

SWE Web Seminar
Thursday, November 29, 2007
5p.m. - 6 p.m. (EST)

Building a Successful Career in the Traditionally Male-Dominated Engineering and Technology Industry
Speakers: CJ Popp and Lauren Silverman

Ever wonder where your career will take you or how you will get that big job you imagined? Do you see professional women walking into office buildings and wonder what they do for a living and how they got there? In today's world, we like to believe that women are viewed as equals to our male counter-parts in the business world; however, we are still an obvious minority in the technology and engineering sectors that are dominated by male managers and peers. Hear the stories of how two successful female professionals built careers on Wall Street in the technology sector. They will share some of the lessons that they learned along the way about how to maneuver to the senior ranks and be recognized and promoted for their accomplishments.



Celebrating Our Successes



You are invited to join the **Eastern Nebraska Section of the Society of Women Engineers** for the start of this Holiday Season. We will highlight some of our latest events, and spend an evening of celebrating our successes in our work and in our community.

Thursday, November 29
Pasta Amore
Rockbrook Village, 108th & Center St.

6:00 Social
6:45 Dinner

Spouses, colleagues, and friends are welcome!



Meal Choices:

Each meal choice includes salad, roll, coffee or tea, tip and tax.

- | | |
|--|------|
| Tortellini with crème sauce | \$20 |
| Pasta Combination | \$21 |
| (includes cannelloni, lasagna, ravioli and tortellini) | |
| Chicken Parmesan | \$22 |
| Salmon Genoa | \$24 |
| (served with angel hair pasta, tomato broth with spinach and artichoke hearts) | |



Prepayment for your meal is not required, but would be greatly appreciated. You may send a check made out to SWE to:

Attn: Janet Doan, C/O TERRACON, 2211 South 156th Circle, Omaha, NE 68130

Please **RSVP** by Monday, November 26 to Janis Pfingsten at 431-8596 or Janis.Pfingsten@swe.org

Directions: Pasta Amore is located just off of the southeast intersection of I-680 and Center Street. Take the Center Street exit off of I-680. Go east for about one block to the traffic light. Turn right onto 108th Street. Turn right again at either entrance into Rockbrook Plaza. The restaurant is in the northeast corner of the second set of buildings in the shopping area. You may enter the party room through the doors on the north side marked "Party Room Entrance".



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Next Meeting



There will not be a meeting in December. Enjoy the holidays.

Upcoming Meetings

January – Work-Life Balance Topic

February 21 – EWEEK Banquet

stay tuned for more fabulous EWEEK Events

March – Joint meeting with ASCE

Regional Conference

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.

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.

It's Never to 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

Amanda Stahlnecker and HDR were host to a job shadow for a Central High School student. Jasmyn had attended our WOW! That's Engineering event and decided she wants to be a civil engineer. Amanda and some of her co-workers showed Jasmyn around the office and told her about different areas of civil engineering and some projects they worked on. By the end of the day Jasmyn seemed very happy about her experience. She is going to pursue a degree in civil engineering.

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

Good day. My name is Lara Syrocki and I am the Section President and UNO Section Counselor. I currently work for Kleinfelder as a Project Manager in the Environmental Department. I have a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with Geotechnical Engineering emphasis from Jordan University of Science and Technology (1993), a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with Environmental Engineering emphasis from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln/Omaha (1995), and a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln/Omaha (1997). I am a registered professional engineer in the State of Nebraska and Iowa.

Being an environmental engineer gives me the opportunity to work with a multitude of clients, from the mom and pop family owned business to a world wide corporation. My projects range from working on solving an environmental problem for a corner gas station in a small town to permitting and planning for a corridor study to working with a corporation to streamline their compliance requirements.

In addition to SWE, I am also involved with the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) as the Environmental Chair and the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME). I spend my time away from work with my husband Matt, my son William, and our extended family. Between homework, soccer practices, and piano I manage to do reading and authentic cooking. I volunteer at William's school and at Church.

UNO Update

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

Upcoming events

November 25 – Company Tour - URS

UNL UPDATE

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

LOCAL JOB POSTINGS

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

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



For more information about the section's activities, please visit our website at www.swe-nebraska.org

Traveling Tip

Earring Storage

It is easy to forget your pearls on the hotel nightstand when you wake to catch an early flight. Fasten your studs in the holes of your watchband and you will avoid a frantic call to the hotel lost and found.

2007 National SWE Conference



Two of our member attended the 2007 National SWE Conference, Angel McMullen-Gunn and Janis Pflingsten. The following articles describe their experiences.

Angel's Experience

Attending the SWE National Convention in Nashville, TN, October 23rd – 28th was a great experience. The conference offered numerous opportunities of career enhancement, leadership training, diversity topics, networking and fun!

I attended continuing education courses that focused on learning styles, leadership and motivation. Professional Development sessions, such as “What Else Can I Do With My Engineering Degree?” and “Balancing Work and Young Children” helped to put things in perspective for me, now that I am expecting my first in February. I also strolled through the Career Fair that offered more than 250 leading corporations, government agencies and graduate schools exhibits (and cool freebies!). I was also able to check out some of the local attractions including taking in a show at the Grand Ole Opry to see the Charlie Daniels Band, as well as attending an Nashville Predators NHL game.

My favorite part of the conference was the continuing education courses in which I enrolled. The first session I attend was called “Finding Your Way: Navigating Work By Understanding Your Learning Self,” instructed by Noreen C. Campbell, a chemical engineer from DuPont who retired in December 2006, while holding the title of manager of safety health and environmental for DuPont's C&CT Platform. She spoke about how women need ways to position themselves for success. The session helped me to recognize unique learning patterns by utilizing the innovative interactive learning model of Let Me Learn®, based on research completed at Rowen and Hofstra Universities. The model highlights four distinct patterned operations that people use for learning to identify and characterize both my own and others' ways of thinking. By doing so, I can affectively relate to them to create strategies that accelerate and improve learning in many situations.

The second education session I attended was “Working with Difficult People,” led by Renee Weisman, a Distinguished Engineer and director of Interconnect and Packaging Engineering at IBM. With over 30 years of experience, she was the first female engineering manager at IBM East Fishkill. Renee spoke that wherever you work and whatever career you choose, there will be times when you are forced to work with difficult people; be it the male chauvinist, the minimizer, the interrupter or any other nonproductive personalities, a combination of assertiveness and tact can negate their power. The classes discussed examples of disruptive personalities and Renee was able to recommend techniques to take back control.

“Employee Motivation: Whose Job IS IT Anyway - Would You Work for You?”, was the final continuing education course I attended. It was given by Christine Corelli, author of the popular books *Wake Up and Smell the Competition* and *The ART of Influencing Customers to BUY from YOU*. She has been a guest on many radio and TV programs and has published articles in numerous business journals, magazines and trade publications worldwide and was a great speaker that provided real-world ideas, solutions to staff problems with essential leadership skills for women.

Next year's National SWE conference is scheduled for November 6th – 8th in Baltimore, MD. I encourage both the collegiate and professional members of SWE to attend this great event!

Janis's Experience

The SWE National Conference was held in Nashville, Tennessee at the end of October. I had such a great time at the National conference last year in Kansas City, that I made sure I didn't miss this year's conference either. It was a great chance to meet other engineers from our region and to find out what they have been doing this past year. It is also nice to put a face to the name in an email message.

I attended the conference from Tuesday evening thru Saturday morning this year. Most of the sessions and tours start on Thursday, but I came in early for some other business meetings with the Leadership Coaching Committee.

The speaker for the Keynote Breakfast on Thursday morning was Adriane Brown, President and CEO of Honeywell Transportation Systems. She talked about how her career progressed and how her upbringing helped her in the workplace to overcome diversity and to overcome other obstacles. She gave a very good presentation. The rest of that day and Friday were spent attending several sessions broken up into tracks such as professional development, diversity, career transition, academic careers, and technical tours. A couple sessions that I attended were on conducting surveys, fundraising, and changing careers. There were so many options to choose from during each time slot that it was hard to choose just one to attend.

I would highly recommend that everyone make it a point to attend the National Conference next fall in Baltimore. The information and knowledge that you gain will be a benefit to both you and your company. When the information is posted on the SWE website, check it out. Look at all that the Conference has to offer you personally, and the benefits to your company. Check with your company and ask for their support. They may be willing to pay for all or at least part of your participation in the conference. I hope to see you in Baltimore in 2008.



Happy Thanksgiving

SWE BRIEFING FEATURES DR. DONNA SHALALA AND A NEW SWE RETENTION STUDY ON WOMEN IN ENGINEERING

On October 18, 2007, SWE and ten co-sponsoring organizations convened a Congressional briefing entitled, "The Leaky Science and Engineering Pipeline: How Can We Retain More Women in Academia and Industry?"

Discussion focused on industry and academia experiencing parallel challenges in retaining and advancing the numbers of women trained in STEM disciplines, and focused on two recently released studies. Over 90 people attended this briefing, including U.S. policy makers and their staff, and stakeholders in government, academia, and industry.

Moderated by Dr. Semahat Demir, SWE Director of External Affairs, the briefing featured two speakers: Dr. Donna Shalala, current President of the University of Miami, former Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and former Chair of the National Academies Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering; and Dr. Lisa Frehill, Executive Director of the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology.

One year ago, the aforementioned National Academies Committee released the report, *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering*, so SWE was honored that Dr. Shalala was able to participate in this briefing to reflect on the report's recommendations one year later. This influential report concluded that "Women are a small portion of the science and engineering faculty members at research universities, and they typically receive fewer resources and less support than their male colleagues. The representation of women in leadership positions in our academic institutions, scientific and professional societies, and honorary organizations is low relative to the numbers of women qualified to hold these positions. It is not lack of talent, but unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures that are hindering the access and advancement of women."

U.S. industry experiences comparable challenges in recruiting, retaining, and advancing women in engineering and technology. Through the generous support of the SWE Corporate Partnership Council (CPC), SWE has completed a study of men and women trained in engineering that identifies the motivators and barriers for men and women to a successful technical career. Dr. Lisa Frehill, Executive Director of the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology (CPST), provided an analysis of the SWE report for attendees. Available speaker presentations will soon be available on the SWE web site: <http://www.swe.org>.

The briefing was being held in conjunction with the new House Diversity and Innovation Caucus, and featured U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), Caucus Co-Chair, as a special guest. Both the ASME Center for Leadership and Diversity and the ASME Center for Public Awareness were among the 10 co-sponsors of this event.

Melissa Carl handles public policy-related education issues for ASME and also serves as SWE's Washington Representative. She can be reach at carlm@asme.org.

It's the Holiday season and we all know what that means – **CLEANING THE HOUSE**

Tip: THINK SMALL

When cleaning your home, think room by room instead of the entire house at once. Tackle one room at a time, one day at a time. When you spread out your cleaning chores, you'll be surprised how quickly and easily your home will shine.