



October 2011

KC-SWE NEWSLETTER

The Society of Women Engineers - Kansas City Section, P.O. Box 860426, Shawnee, KS 66226
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A report from the National Conference *by Shelley Wolff*

The 2011 SWE National Conference in Chicago was terrific!! It is wonderful to see so many awesome women engineers gathered in one location.

Most attendees arrive on Wednesday to take advantage of special career enhancement seminars, participate in pre-conference committee meetings or enjoy one of many tours of local sites and facilities. I went on the Chicago Architecture Foundation River Cruise that day and learned many fascinating things about the Chicago skyline. Our guide identified the many different styles of buildings from gothic to art deco to modern as he told stories of the history of the area. It was a fun way to kick off my week. Wednesday at conference is also fabled for the famous SWE Ice Cream Social – a great place to meet old and new friends.

The conference officially opened Thursday morning with words of wisdom from Natalie Givans, senior vice president at Booz Allen Hamilton where she is involved in cyber security of health records. Givans admonished us to use the words “work-life integration”, not “work-life balance”, as lives and interests evolve over time. At times, work may be the priority and in other times family or outside interests may take priority – we should not feel that we must do all things all the time perfectly. Givans also noted her belief in the “3 I’s”:

- Involved – Don’t be ‘one deep’ in any organization. Build a team that can be relied upon and can backfill as you move up in the company.
- Informed – You don’t need to be at every meeting or in every conversation. You should trust others on your team to communicate to you what is important. Likewise, you should be a good communicator to others.
- Interested – Make certain you are interested in what you are doing.

Attendees participated in a variety of sessions following Givans’ keynote ranging from technical subjects to career development issues. One of the best sessions I attended was “Interviewing for Success”. The presenters noted that the open-ended question, “Tell me about yourself”, is not an invitation to tell your life story. It is an invitation to tell the interviewer how you can benefit their operation. It was suggested that you have five ready-to-go/rehearsed answers to this question to convey information about your successful projects and activities. The STAR approach organizes your responses in the following way:

- Situation – Describe the situation (i.e. challenge or problem), including the obstacle or hurdle you had to overcome before it could be accomplished. Be brief and clear.
- Task – What was your role? State this very simply.
- Action – Describe what you did step-by-step. How did you resolve the problem? List the specific actions you took.
- Results – Describe the results. What were the benefits? Include any measures or quantities. What was the impact? Be brief and keep your audience in mind (i.e. if the interviewer is from Finance, mention the financial results).

You should also highlight the skills you used in the assignment and the traits that you demonstrated.



RAISING THE HEIGHTS
OF INNOVATION

A report from the Conference (continued)

Thursday evening and Friday were all about the career fair for me. Our HNTB booth was very busy with many talented women inquiring about full time and intern positions. I did find time, however, to sneak away to the Past Presidents Reception and the Fellows Tea – both great opportunities to catch up with friends that I only see once a year at the conference. The Achievement Awards Banquet on Friday night is always inspirational. I encourage everyone to read the SWE Magazine or visit the SWE web site to read about the award recipients.

Saturday again held a variety of sessions and activities including the Membership Meeting and Celebrate SWE closing internal award event. I took some time on Saturday afternoon to tour the Chicago Art Museum – another great offering of our host city.

I absolutely love going to the National Conference. It reconnects me to friends and colleagues, reminds me about the vastness of the field of engineering, and inspires me to strive to achieve more. See you in Houston next year!

Volunteering at Invent It. Build It. *by Susan Enneking*

On Saturday, October 15th I attended the second annual Invent it. Build it. outreach event at the McCormick Convention center in Chicago. Invent it. Build it. Is a collaborative effort between SWE, WGBH's Design Squad Nation and Girl Scouts of America. This year's event, themed Making a Difference, was sponsored by The Exxon Mobil Foundation. It was attended by 282 girls and 140 volunteers. The guest speaker was Design Squad Nation's, Deysi Melgar.. The girls participated in the following activities:

- ▲ Puff Mobile - an air powered car
- ▲ Harmless Holder - an environmentally friendly soda can holder
- ▲ Helping Hand - a device to help those with limited mobility retrieve objects out of their reach

Each of these activities required the girls to invent something useful within a small amount of time using a limited amount of materials. I was amazed at how rapidly they adapted to the challenge and how they were able to approach each new task with novel ideas. The participants were also required to work with girls they hadn't met before the event. They were able to form productive relationships with their assigned team members quickly. Their teamwork skills were quite impressive.

I had a great time watching so many capable girls working together to produce very creative solutions to the problems they were presented. Girls with their attitudes can undoubtedly "Make a Difference" in our world.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

KC–SWE Recognizes PLTW Volunteers

Thank you to our members who have volunteered their time for Project Lead the Way.

- Mentor Day Volunteers - Susan Enneking, Kasie Holle, Jane Knoche and Melissa Ver Meer.
- Student Interview Volunteers - Naz Ahmed, Deepthi Abbireddy, Laura Davis, Kelli Deuth, Sunita Gupta, Jessica Lamb, Lori Watson, Jen Vogel, Leslie Voss, Bekki Walsh and Melissa Womack

Outreach Chair Appointment

The KC-SWE executive board has appointed Kristin Ehlers as our 2012 Outreach Chair. Kristin replaces Angie Ladwig, who is moving out of our area due to work. Thank you Angie for all your contributions to KC SWE and best of luck in your future endeavors.

KC–SWE Executive Board Meeting Schedule

Executive board meetings will be held the third Tuesday of each month, excluding December, from 7–8 pm at Pan era, 15108 W 119th St, Olathe KS 66062 (between Hwy 35 and Black Bob, N side of 119th). There will NOT be a December meeting. All members are welcome to attend.

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day

by Kristin Ehlers

Overall, the U.S is falling behind on the international scene when it comes to the number of college graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Moreover, the percentage of women graduating from engineering programs is falling under 20%. SWE hopes to encourage young women into pursuing STEM related fields and filling this gap through its 2nd annual Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (IGED). National IGED is Thursday, February 23, 2012 as part of national Engineers Week. Our IGED will be held on Friday, February 17, 2012 at UMKC as a kickoff to Kansas City's Engineers Week.

Let's MEET & GREET! *by Amanda Wages*

Have you ever wondered exactly what the Kansas City SWE Chapter did? What they were involved in? And how you could get involved?

Well if you have, you are just like me! And I invite you to come out and meet us and get involved. Our chapter has implemented a monthly gathering to keep in touch with one another and with the many opportunities to get involved in the community. Meet & Greet's will occur on the 2nd Wednesday of each month on the Plaza. The locations will change to keep up the excitement. Do you have a location suggestion? The next month's location will be chosen by those in attendance, so you better plan to show up!

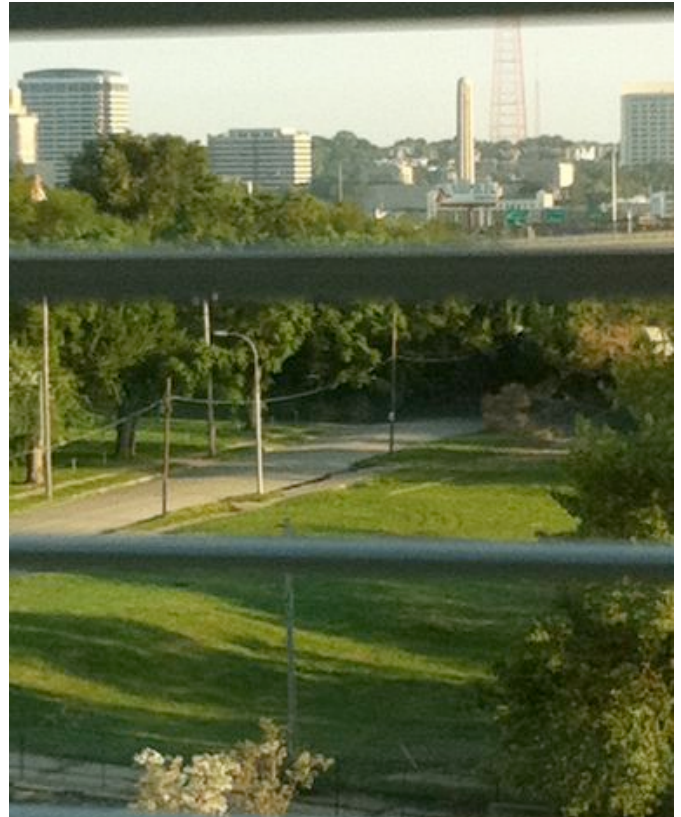
November 9th's Meet & Greet: Come hear more about the SWE National Conference!
We will meet at Tomfooleries at 5:30 – 7:00 pm (come as you can)

RECENT EVENTS

2011 Fellows Reception

by Jane Knoche

Our Kansas City Section Fellows hosted an August 30th reception at HNTB headquarters in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. We had a positive time networking with our members from Kansas City, Topeka, and students from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Our section breadth was well represented with members from government, academia, consulting, manufacturing, and sales. Four of our five Kansas City Section Fellows were present – Cheri Leigh, Deb O'Bannon, Shelley Wolff, and Jane Knoche. Each shared briefly their engineering background and SWE connection. We also presented our fifth Fellow in absentia– Lynn Bertuglia, who was on travel. Many of our planned Section activities were pre-viewed including Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (IGED), Joint Engineers Council and the 2011 National Conference in Chicago. The Fellows presented their Top Ten Benefits of attending the National Conference. It was a great evening of meeting new faces and catching up with colleagues. As you can tell from the photos, the view of the West Bottoms is a spectacular background to a enjoyable evening of interaction.



Top Ten Reasons to Go to Conference:

10. The Ice Cream Social on opening night
9. You get to explore some cool cities that you wouldn't see otherwise
8. All the amazing and latest items at the Exhibits, including tee shirts, tools, gadgets, etc!
7. Assume that every woman in the elevator is an Engineer - there are SO MANY Women Engineers in ONE spot.
6. The Career Fair is a great opportunity to validate your worth as a desired commodity in the engineering market
5. For professional / licensed engineers, it is a great place to get Professional Development Hours
4. It gets me out of my discipline paradigm and I get to see what is going on with other engineering disciplines
3. Seeing / making friends once a year and the conversation picks up right from the prior year!
2. Inspiration of seeing the award recipients and keynote addresses
1. The Over the Hill Suite - Abundance of mentors & pioneers and seeing and hearing their stories.

Stay tuned for details on these events in future newsletters

Great Plains Regional Future City Competition, January 21st 2012, KU Campus, Lawrence, KS

2011 Introduce a Girl to Engineering (IGED) Kansas City, February 17th 2012

First Robotics Kansas and Western Missouri Regional Competition, March 1st-3rd 2012

Regional Conference, Tulsa, OK, March 2nd-3rd 2012

Volunteers Needed to Support KC SWE 2012 Goals

In September, the new KC SWE Board met to determine our 2012 Goal and Objectives. Our goals are divided among four groups that will meet separately to determine the future steps for KC SWE. If you see a topic of interest, please consider joining us by emailing the group contact listed below.

❖ **Creating Community**

Goal: Link / involve area women in SWE-KC

Potential Strategies to Achieve Results:

- Survey members and non-members to understand needs
- Build diversity in the SWE-KC community (be inclusive of women with young children)
- Connect to women in KC technical organizations
- Create a positive experience at events and through communications
- Contact student upgrade and new professional members who have moved to KC area
- Host monthly meet and greet for new and potential members

Contact: Stephanie DeCaro, stephanie.decaro@yahoo.com

❖ **Growing the Profession – Outreach**

Goal: Introduce girls and women to and encourage them to pursue STEM fields.

Potential Strategies to Achieve Results:

- Be a resource to educators regarding STEM careers
- Support collegiate SWE members
- Support STEM-related awards (Future Cities, Robotic)

Contact: Kristin Ehlers, kehlers@kcp.com

❖ **Professional Excellence**

Goal: Build a technical professional image for SWE-KC

Potential Strategies to Achieve Results:

- Provide quality technical professional development programs using SWE national webinars as a base
- Increase recognition of achievements locally and nationally
- Provide professional development resources
- Provide support for members taking the FE and PE exams
- Prepare and submit two nominations locally or nationally (DNE and Fellow)
- Increase participation in Regional and National SWE Conferences

Contact: Amanda Wages

❖ **Industry Catalyst**

Goal: Educate SWE-KC members and other KC area engineers on SWE policy positions

Potential Strategies to Achieve Results:

- Communicate policy positions to SWE-KC community
- Utilize the JEC organization as a forum to educate others on SWE policy positions
- Promote the designation of women speakers at all joint meetings

Contact: Jane Knoche, jane.knoche@swe.org

Thank you for helping us continue to build KC SWE!