



# Society of Women Engineers

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## Northeast Ohio Professional Section Newsletter

*Editor: Shannon R. Brown*

*April 20, 2006*

### President's Message

by: Shannon R Brown

governor and members from other professional and collegiate sections are expected in attendance. Guests are welcome as part of our continued effort to increase the viability and visibility of our section.

**S**WE Northeast Ohio (NEOH) has had a very exciting first quarter. The year began with an E-Week kick off at the Great Lakes Science center, followed by membership turnout for the Regional Conference at the University of Cincinnati and ending with a networking event that explored the process of wine making. We hope to continue this momentum by hosting a free professional development workshop on leadership and conflict resolution at the University of Akron; I would encourage your attendance at this special event. For the workshop SWE leadership coaches Justina Mikals and Helen Patricia will be presenting, and the Regional

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A number of other items have been happening in the background of SWE NEOH. Not the least of this is that our section now has a website. The address is [www.swe.org/RegionG/neohio/](http://www.swe.org/RegionG/neohio/) and I would encourage you to visit the site regularly for section news and

event updates. In addition, we would like to begin a mentoring initiative within the section to aid in the career development of our younger members. From personal experience, I can say that mentoring is crucial for young engineers; my mentor has had more positive impact on my adult life than anyone outside of my direct family. If you would be interested in mentoring one of our members or if you are in need of one, I would ask you to contact us at [SWE\\_NEOH\\_SRB@hotmail.com](mailto:SWE_NEOH_SRB@hotmail.com) so that we can begin this valuable service program.

## Diversity Focus: Generational Differences

by: Marilyn Reeder

If you have ever wondered why you can't get your message across to that 20-something in your meeting or why your team leader refuses to respond to your emails then you may have experienced the generational divide. For the first time in history there are four separate generations sharing the workplace and this has brought a whole new dimension to diversity discussions. Everyone is familiar with the typical dimensions of diversity: race, gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation, but we often neglect the differences of that our formative experiences bring to the workplace. It is important to be aware of the way that these differences can affect our ability to work together.

The four generations are: the Matures born before 1946, the Boomers born between 1946 and 1964, Gen-Xers born between 1965 and 1983, and the Millennials born between 1984 and 1999. Each generation has different formative experiences, different values, different perceptions and different motivators. These differences can lead to misunderstanding, conflict and miscommunication. By developing understanding of these differences we can find ways to work together across the generational divide. Let's look at each generation separately:

The Matures were raised through the Great Depression and World War II. They have learned to live within limited means and are very formal in their work style. They are very loyal to the company and have a strong respect for authority and sense of duty. They value honesty and integrity and are ok with delayed gratification. They believe in paying their dues to get ahead and follow the rules. They prefer a formal communication style including written memos and procedures.

The Boomers were molded by the civil rights and women's movements, the space race, and the Vietnam War. Their generation has brought us many of the rights and opportunities that we now have and often take for granted. They are also the inventors of the 50+ hour workweek. Boomers define themselves by their career and achievements. In the workplace they are very optimistic and hard working and they seek personal gratification and growth. Being very team oriented they like to have a lot of

face-to-face communication, and often spend a great deal of time in meetings.

Gen-Xers have been raised in the computer age. They are very techno-savvy and like their communication to be informal. Coming of age in the time of corporate downsizing and right sizing, they have little company loyalty and tend to change jobs more often than their older co-workers. This generation of latchkey children value balance in their lives and want to work smarter not harder.

The Millennials are just beginning to enter the workforce. These individuals want communication to be participative and electronic. They question everything and live in the moment. They are very goal oriented, tolerant of differences, and have a lot of self-confidence. They don't want to have to pay their dues (put in time) to get ahead.

A couple cautionary notes: avoid pigeon-holing people based on their age and recognize that some individuals are "cuspers": "people who identify with two generations. There is no perfect set of characteristics to describe each individual born in a given generation and some older people will embrace the fresh, new ideas of younger co-workers, just as some younger people will appreciate the traits of the older generations.

So, how do we bridge these differences? We become aware of them and recognize that each individual's formative experiences are going to make them unique. Then we look at the strengths of each individual and use him or her to improve the overall effectiveness of

the team, committee, or department. We also develop ways to effectively communicate across the differences.

Older individuals need to respect younger individual's need for fast communication and use email. Boomers need to recognize that Gen-Xers do not want to work 70 hours a week. Matures need to get over the notion that you can only get ahead by putting in time or paying your dues. Younger workers need to be willing to have face-to-face communication and stop multitasking when working with Boomers. Gen-Xers need to respect the Boomers need for personal growth. Millennials need to respect the maturity and experience of older workers. Everyone needs to respect each other and embrace their unique qualities.

Four generations working together can be one of the greatest assets of an organization. The combination of skills and values can be used to meet the needs of a variety of customers and stakeholders. Respect must be two (or four) way. The experience of the older workers can be of value to younger workers just as the innovative ideas of younger workers can revitalize older workers. So when you are having trouble getting your point across or you can't understand why your team mate does things the way they do take a minute and consider if it's a generational difference that is keeping you from getting the job done.

## E-Week 2006



by: Shannon R. Brown

**S**WE NEOH participated in an outreach event at the Great Lakes Science on Saturday, February 18 to kick-off E-Week. At the SWE table, children were introduced to experimental design with a paper helicopter experiment, simple machines and to copper plating. Children were particularly bright eyed when a paperclip was

### ***Volunteers Needed!***

Volunteers are needed for our next outreach event on May 20. Please contact us at [SWE\\_NEOH\\_SRB@hotmail.com](mailto:SWE_NEOH_SRB@hotmail.com) if interested.

suddenly covered in copper and had great enjoyment modifying designs of handmade paper helicopters to improve their flight time.

## Wine & Cheese Networking



by: Virginia Brandt

**S**hould we make red or white? Just one of the questions, the Northeast Ohio SWE members gathered at It's Your Winery had to decide in order to start a batch of our very own wine. More than a dozen members of the section attended the Wine & Cheese networking event in Fairlawn, Ohio on Friday, March 24th.

NEOH VP of Programming, Lisa Rimpf, kicked off the evening with introductions as we renewed old acquaintances and greeted new friends. Then, it was down to the task of everyone agreeing on one type of wine to make. Taste testing of the available varieties and discussion of preferences quickly narrowed the choices to a few candidates. With relative ease, "Sonoma Dry Creek Valley Chardonnay (Unoaked)" was chosen as the best candidate.

Mr. John Scurka, of It's Your Winery, then put us to work as he explained the wine making process. As we donned our aprons, members pitched in to add and mix the ingredients, adding our own commentary about the engineering

principles we were employing in the process. We learned about the different types of wines and the wine making process, including grape selection, additives, and the aging and bottling process. For the next eight weeks, our batch of wine will be aging. It will be ready for bottling in late May, when we will return to finish our wine.



Mark your calendars for the evening of May 26th to participate in the second half of the event (even if you missed the first half) for the opportunity to continue networking as we complete the wine making process.

## Point to Ponder

by: Shannon R. Brown

Does the policy requiring continuing education credits to be obtained in order to maintain licensure as a professional engineer in the state of Ohio place a burden on women who choose to stay at home for a duration of time but wish to reenter the workforce?

## Collegiate Corner

by: Mary C. Verstraete, Ph.D.

As a veteran SWE Faculty Advisor (13+ years) and a veteran student (10 years), I hope to provide some insight into creating and sustaining a SWE Student Chapter. I have been blessed over the years to have worked with some fantastic SWE students and dedicated SWE officers. I feel that a dedicated and active group of students is essential to have a successful SWE Student Section. The Faculty Advisor or SWE Counselor can provide the glue to hold the group together from year to year, and even get past a few “thin” years, but it is the students who truly make the Society what it is. In addition, I believe it is important to find out what makes your chapter “tick”, what gets the students excited, what activities bring them out from behind their books, where is the groups passion. Our own chapter struggled for a while until we found out that the group was really excited about outreach activities and philanthropic endeavors. We will have 20-30 members show up for a Girl Scout activity and only 5 turn up for a fun bowling night. You may have to try a series of different events to find out what your group is interested in.

With respect to the National scene, you may have noticed a change from the word “Student” to the word “Collegiate”. This reflects changes going on at SWE HQ to include a more diverse group to SWE by using the more inclusive term “Collegiate”. There is a new national

committee called The Collegiate Interests Committee (CIC). I am the Faculty Advisor Liaison for this new committee and represent the interests of both students and faculty advisors. This committee replaces the Student Activities Committee (SAC) and serves a different purpose altogether. The SAC was focused on “housekeeping” duties for the Student Sections, collecting reports, award applications, etc. The new CIC is a strategic planning committee, looking towards the future of our collegiate members and benefits available to them. I will keep you informed with the new plans and ideas coming out of this committee as time progresses.

## Welcome to New Members!

### *Falon Jones*



**F**alon is a recent graduate of the University of Akron (BSMPE) and is currently employed as a Product Engineer for Parker-Hannifin’s Industrial Hose Division in Strongsville, OH. Falon and her fellow colleagues are continuously researching and investigating new innovative products and technology to bring to Parker-Hannifin.

Through gaining more experience and knowledge in the rubber and hose industry, Falon plans to continue developing her rubber compounding skills. Outside of work, she loves to spend time with her family and two schnoodle puppies. She lives with her husband, John, in Brunswick, Ohio.

### *Nancy E. Uridil*



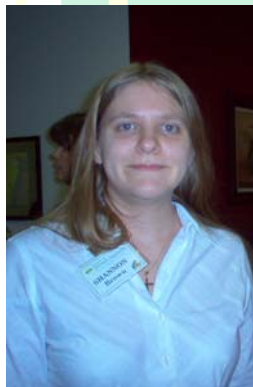
**N**ancy is a graduate of Purdue University with a BS in Civil Engineering. Nancy is a Senior Vice President, Global Operations at Moen. Her responsibilities include: Moen’s Global Operations including Manufacturing, Sourcing, Logistics & Distribution, Quality, Customer Service, Business Process Reengineering and Consumer Services. She joined Moen in September, 2005 from Estee Lauder Cos, where she served as Senior Vice President Global Quality Assurance and Supply Chain and she began her career with Procter & Gamble in manufacturing management. During her 22-year career with P&G, Nancy took on progressively more responsible positions in manufacturing including plant manager. While at Procter & Gamble she broadened her career with assignments in marketing, personnel, supply chain

management and five businesses. From P&G, Nancy joined Mary Kay, Inc. as the Senior Vice President Manufacturing where she had responsibility for manufacturing as well as global engineering, purchasing, and package design. She has been working internationally extensively for half of her career. She currently lives in Rocky River, but is building a home in Avon Lake. She is married to Frank Bossu and has two adult children, Christen and Dave.

## Meet the FY07 Officer Slate

*President:*

***Shannon R. Brown***



**S**hannon is a graduate of the University of Akron with a MS in Chemical Engineering and dual BS degrees in Chemical Engineering and Biology. Currently she is working as an R&D Engineer for ELTECH Systems in Fairport Harbor, Ohio where she has been heavily involved in technology transfer and scale-up from the laboratory to manufacturing. Prior to attending Akron U, Shannon was a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy, which she left because of a knee injury. Her

technical interests include biomaterials, sol-gels and anode technology. She is married and lives in Mentor, Ohio.

***VP of Programming:***

***Lisa Rimpf***



**H**ello! - Allow me to introduce myself... I am a recent 2005 December graduate from The University of Toledo with a Master of Science in Chemical Engineering (B.S., May 2003). My thesis work was completed at the NASA Glenn Research Center (Cleveland) titled "Measurements of Spark Ignition Energy of n-Octane and i-Octane." Having grown up on the west-side of Cleveland, I am a 'home-town' girl at heart and was thrilled when I got a job in the area. As a new employee at The Babcock & Wilcox Company, I work as a Research Engineer at their facility in Alliance and live in Akron. I am a member of SWE because it is a support system: it supports me with friendships and professional development, and I in turn support the vision of the organization through outreach activities. I was extremely involved in The University of Toledo collegiate section and also served as Regional Conference Chair in 2005; I was happy upgrading to a professional section and joining a

new group. I look forward to seeing you around

***VP Membership:  
Virginia Brandt***



Virginia Brandt is a graduate of the University of Missouri (BSChE) and has spent her career working at Energizer in various roles in quality engineering and in research and development of household batteries. Currently she is the General Manager of Alkaline Technology at the Westlake, Ohio global technology center. Virginia and her team of engineers and scientists are tasked with keeping the Energizer Bunny going and going.... Her career roles and assignments over the years have provided for many opportunities to travel around the world bringing with it many adventures. Virginia is also pursuing an MBA degree at Kent State University. Along with her SWE duties, studying for exams and writing papers for her classes, she stays quite busy. Virginia is an avid cyclist and enjoys the outdoors. She lives with her husband, Jeff, in Avon Lake, Ohio.

***Collegiate Liaison:  
Mary Verstraete, Ph.D.***



Hi! My name is Mary C. Verstraete and I am the Collegiate Liaison for the SWE Northeast Ohio Professional Section. I have been a member of SWE and the Faculty Advisor for The University of Akron's SWE Student Section since 1993. I am also the Faculty Advisor Liaison for the SWE Collegiate Interests Committee. As you can see, I wear many hats and like to be active in the areas that relate to our Collegiate Members.

I have been at The University of Akron, Department of Biomedical Engineering for 18 years, after graduating with my B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in Applied Mechanics/Biomechanics from Michigan State University. I am primarily active in undergraduate teaching and student advising, but also continue to do some research in the area of Human Movement. In addition to SWE, I am also the Faculty Advisor for the Student Chapter of the Biomedical Engineering Society.

I am single and live with my 7 year old Border Collie mix, Topsy. She keeps me busy in my "free time" playing ball or Frisbee. I also enjoy

golf, photography and numerous home improvement projects.

## ***FY07 Elections***

The time is fast approaching for the FY07 section elections. Many of the officers from this year have volunteered to continue their positions. If you are interested in volunteering for an active role in section leadership next year, please contact us at [SWE\\_NEOH\\_SRB@hotmail.com](mailto:SWE_NEOH_SRB@hotmail.com) with a short biography and interest towards what office or role you would be interested in filling. Elected positions include: positions are President, VP, COR, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other roles such as outreach officers, officer in charge of fundraising and officer in charge of section succession planning and elections are also needed. If you have an interest, we would greatly appreciate your support.

## **Vision**

To encourage professional development for our members, to improve section vitality and to further the outreach and visibility of SWE

## **Submission Guidelines**

If you have any items to submit, please write a short paragraph or article and e-mail it to the editor at [SWE\\_NEOH\\_SRB@hotmail.com](mailto:SWE_NEOH_SRB@hotmail.com), noting SWE NEOH Newsletter in the subject.

### **Upcoming NEOH SWE Events**

***April 22***

Workshop on Leadership & Conflict Resolution

***May 20***

"Picture Yourself as an Engineer" Outreach

***May 26***

Wine & Cheese Networking Part II

## **Goals:**

- Encourage Small Group Interactions
- Focus on Professional Development
- Mentoring Initiative