



The

# Windy City Wire

Society of Women Engineers Chicago Regional Section

## **SWE-CRS President's Letter – April/May 2009**

Katie Amelio, SWE-CRS FY09 President

Email: [swecrs-president@swe.org](mailto:swecrs-president@swe.org)

Spring is a time of renewal and change – so I hope you are all creating positive changes in your life and the lives of others. To support you in this process, your local SWE section has offered a variety of events including a joint meeting with Iota Sigma Pi on Building Green, a PE (professional engineer) panel discussion and a Professional Development Conference, as well as the member circle events. Further opportunities to create change are available to you through SWE on the national, regional and local levels. Volunteers and participation is always encouraged.

In February, members of the Chicago Regional Section participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> DuPage Engineers Week Expo. We conducted a ScavEngineer hunt where students needed to seek out engineers and ask them questions about the type of engineering they do, the classes needed to be this type of engineer and what they enjoy about their work. During the ScavEngineer hunt, the parents also seem very interested in the information shared with students. It was inspiring to see so many parents invested in informing their children about the variety of engineering career paths that are available. We also hosted SWEet Flight, this event provided an opportunity to design a paper airplane and learn about the basics of flight engineering.

NSPE and National Engineers Week organizers are counting the hours of outreach provided by engineers – to log your hours, check out: [www.millionhoursdjangodomain.com](http://www.millionhoursdjangodomain.com). Outreach hours include visiting a classroom, participating in an extracurricular or community activity, presenting at a career fair and many other activities. The goal is to reach a collective one million hours of outreach in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education by December 2009.

To create change in the lives of local students, sign up for one of our outreach opportunities (Chicago Cares or A.N. Pritzker Elementary's Science Night) more information on these can be found in the weekly e-mail news flash.

Our section's professional development conference, *SWEcomony: Success Strategies for Tough Times*, was held on April 18, 2009. Our committee spent worked hard putting together a day of inspiring, educational and professional sessions to help you adapt to changes in your work and personal lives.

Please plan to join us for the annual SWE-CRS awards banquet that will be held on Thursday June 11, 2009 at the Hyatt Lodge in Oak Brook. We look forward to honoring our scholarship recipients, collegiate sections, and individual section award winners, as well as recognizing our corporate sponsors.

Change is inevitable and I invite you to be part of our section's advancement as we start the process for electing next year's officers. The nominating committee, chaired by Erin Dugan, is assembling a strong slate of candidates to run section activities for FY10. The section's organizational structure is changing this year and we will have three vice-presidents and two secretaries in addition to the president, treasurer and four council of representative members. Our new structure will enable us to better focus on outreach, membership and professional development activities. Please look for voting information to be distributed in May.

Wishing you all a successful spring full of positive change!

In This Issue	page
Spotlight – SWE Member Story	
By Diane DiFrancesco	3-4
Recent Events - GTKSN	
By Harsharan Bains	5
Recent Events – PD Conference	6
Sponsor of the Month – April	7
Sponsor of the Month – May	8



# SWE Member Story

## by Diane DiFrancesco

Travel Places Near and Far

By Diane DiFrancesco

Ref: Travel Places Near and Far pg 111-112

In September of 1975, I had the privilege of attending the International Conference of Women Engineers and Scientists (ICWES) in Krakow, Poland. I was 19 and a chemical engineering student at Clarkson College of Technology. My "sorority" was the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and I was the incoming vice president of our two year old chapter. Dean Misasik advised and supported us with a vengeance, even subsidizing my trip. The President of SWE, Paula Loring, headed our small delegation, of which I was the only American student.

The Vietnam War had just recently ended, and the Cold war was in full freeze. Americans were not loved around the world and this conference took place behind the "Iron Curtain." My dad particularly was concerned about my safety, telling me I couldn't go. But I told him I wasn't asking his permission, just letting him know that my college was sponsoring me to attend.

On the way to Poland, I stopped off in Stuttgart, Germany to visit my best friend and her US Army family. I then headed on to Karkow via Budapest, but was detained there by border patrols. They demanded a visa to enter their country. I was put in a room, where I attempted to tell them that I was just passing through. Eventually, I got to Krakow.

During the Conference - an international exchange of technical advancements and accomplishments by women Engineers - I stayed at the University of Krakow, slept on a straw mattress, and had the best mushroom soup I've ever had in my life. Under the wing of some of our host Polish women, I was taken to the best shops in town, and the Cathedral with its fire-breathing dragon.

Then one afternoon a group of us went on a field trip to Poland's biggest tourist attraction. It was a gray, misty day, and as our bus drove up to this place, I saw a double barbed wire fence. A sign above the entrance said something I couldn't read, but it meant "work brings freedom".

We were at Auschwitz, the largest Nazi death camp during World War II. It was a killing factory - designed, built and run to maximize the death of "undesirables". Millions were murdered here - Jews, artists, homosexuals, anyone the Third Reich didn't like. The gas chambers were haunted by the spirits of those millions, two of whom were Paula Loring's grandparents. She collapsed when she saw the crematoria.

I did not understand then how privileged I was to be an American. My grandparents came from Italy in the 1920s to live the American dream and they did. When I got back to the States after this trip - just as Grandpa Tony did when he arrived - I knelt down and kissed the ground.

continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

A few years after I began my career with Procter & Gamble, I was looking for something to do to support my vocation. I was living in Huntsville, AL and we had just built a new 250,000 square foot plant to make P&G's first medical device. I was coming off literally 100-hour workweeks the first year there and was settling into a more "normal"; routine.

There was no section of my beloved SWE anywhere near me &ndash; Atlanta was the closest. As a Member-at-Large of our society, I felt like a distance cousin of the family, welcomed at our annual get-togethers but comparatively out of the loop. So I volunteered to help the student sections for our southeast region. I was a northern transplant and knew nothing of the SEC or ACC. They play a lot of football and basketball down here.

I spent several years as the Student Activities Coordinator for this SE region. I learned lots about Georgia Tech and the Varsity, Vanderbilt and Nashville, of course Alabama and Auburn, and many other schools I never knew about. Yet this interaction kept my SWE juices alive and flowing. Helping these gals, not much younger than me, was an opportunity I appreciated, and they appreciated the encouragement and support I shared.

Without this regional SWE leadership opportunity, I think SWE may have fallen off my radar. I remained an active MAL for decades and finally settled here in Chicago with one of largest sections in the country. More opportunities to help out and give back.

My thanks to SWE for enriching my career, affording me networking and leadership training, and an avenue now to fulfill our mission of supporting and encouraging young women engineers.

Diane's story appears on the national SWE website along with other member experience stories. Read the others here:

[http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=37&Itemid=315](http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=37&Itemid=315)

SWE-CRS would also like to encourage you to share your own stories for publication in this newsletter. Email your submissions to the newsletter editor. (for FY09, katejakubas@gmail.com)

### Get To Know SWE Night – March 31, 2009

Submitted by Harsharan Bains

The Get to Know SWE Night, sponsored by CB&I, was a blast. Thankfully after a rainy start to the day, the weather changed for the better in the evening and we had a good turnout. Danielle Folkerts, the membership Chair had the SWE information folders ready, which were laid out on the tables for the attendees to take home with them.

Slowly the chitter-chatter in the room increased as everyone came and sat down, met friends or met new people. Whilst enjoying the drinks and cheese and vegetable trays, people mingled and settled down.

On behalf of CB&I, Ed Schoenleber, Vice President of Engineering, Plainfield, who is a father of five and has worked with CB&I for over 25 years, welcomed everyone to the event. He gave an entertaining speech about the necessity of having a good work-life balance, which is also one of the key missions of SWE.

This was followed by Katie Amelio, President of SWE-CRS, welcoming everyone and introducing SWE-CRS to everyone.

Then we had fun with the Ice Breaker activity where we got to know more about one another and everyone's names. There were many prizes to give to the winners of the Ice Breaker activity.

This was followed by dinner, which was pasta with a variety of great pasta sauces, salad, garlic bread, followed by the most delicious chocolate cake, which could not be resisted, and to balance it, some fruit salad too!

Everyone was full and ready to hear what SWE-CRS is all about, so the committee chairs/representative gave information on the following committees:

- Danielle Folkerts – Membership
- Halle Brooks – Programs
- Harsharan Bains – Finance
- Preetha Thomas – Collegiate Liaison
- Dayna Johnson – Scholarship
- Katie Amelio – Outreach

We had a sign-up sheet for every committee, and handed out information about the upcoming Personal Development conference. It also led to getting new people interested in joining SWE-CRS and becoming a committee member!

Thank you to all those who attended, and a big thank you to CB&I for generously supporting this event, and in particular Ed Schoenleber, Brian Eisentrout (my boss) , and the retired Sam Leventry, who have supported the local SWE activities and my SWE activities over these past 2 years. The local group in Naperville has grown and has become an important networking outlet for many engineers in the local area.

The door prizes were won by Gina Schleicher and Jenny Loewenstein!



### Professional Development Conference

On Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, The BP campus in Naperville, IL was taken over by SWE as it presented the 2009 conference – Success Strategies for Tough Times.

Topics varied widely to encompass many facets of life during challenges. Susan Brauer discussed her own empowerment trail from secretary to a dean of engineering and successful author. Other sessions included financial strategies, public policy, entrepreneurship, leadership, and more.

The conference is traditionally on a Saturday and is a low-cost event, making it an easy event to attend and expand your development even if you don't have management sponsorship or leave from work to participate.

No matter whether you missed the conference or participated, keep an eye out for future events and conferences, and consider participating as a volunteer or organizer to help make the conference work for YOU!



2009 Conference sponsors

Recognized for their generous sponsorship of the Professional Development Conference



BP is one of the world's largest energy companies, providing its customers with fuel for transportation, energy for heat and light, retail services and petrochemical products for everyday items. BP has grown from a local oil company into a global energy group; employing over 96,000 people and operating in over 100 countries worldwide. From Alaska to Azerbaijan, from the Gulf of Mexico to China, BP has exploration and production interests in 29 countries, 11 refineries, 80 ships, and thousands of retail outlets.

Producing more than 3.8 million barrels of oil equivalent every day, BP brings energy from the very depths of the earth to virtually every corner of the globe. BP also has invested more than \$28 billion over the last five years in U.S. energy supplies including solar, wind, and natural gas. As demand grows, BP is going further and deeper to secure the energy that the world needs.

Learn more about BP at [www.bp.com](http://www.bp.com) and enjoy products offered by BP's core brands:

Castrol, BP, Arco, Aral, AMPM, Wild Bean Cafe

Recognized for their generous sponsorship of the awards banquet and student scholarship



Argonne National Laboratory seeks solutions to pressing national problems in science and technology. The nation's first national laboratory, Argonne conducts leading-edge basic and applied scientific research in virtually every scientific discipline. Argonne researchers work closely with researchers from hundreds of companies, universities, and federal, state and municipal agencies to help them solve their specific problems, advance America's scientific leadership and prepare the nation for a better future. With employees from more than 60 nations, Argonne is managed by UChicago Argonne, LLC for the [U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science](#).

Learn more about Argonne at [www.anl.gov](http://www.anl.gov)

# Did you know that the Chicago Regional Section was chartered on March 15, 1952?

## Looking for Historical SWE-CRS Information

Are you a SWE member who hasn't been around lately? Do you have valuable information from past years? The historian committee is actively trying to compile historical CRS information. If you have any information, including old officer lists, newsletters, and photos, please email them to [swe-crs@swe.org](mailto:swe-crs@swe.org), or mail to:

Society of Women Engineers  
Chicago Regional Section  
P. O. Box 95525  
Palatine, IL 60095-0525

**Historian's Corner**

## Save the Date!

**Mark your calendars for the evening of June 11th and plan to attend the SWE-CRS Awards Banquet!**

### Contribute to the Newsletter!

The SWE-CRS newsletter depends on your contributions! We'd love to have your articles and submissions!

Kate Jakubas, the newsletter editor for FY09, can be reached at [kate.jakubas@gmail.com](mailto:kate.jakubas@gmail.com)