



Southwest Texas News

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHWEST SECTION OF THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS

FEBRUARY 2009

“The society of Women Engineers stimulates women to achieve full potential as engineers and leaders, expands the image of the engineering profession as a positive force in improving the quality of life, and demonstrates value of diversity.”

NEW!

~ [SWE Website](#) ~

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Past Event Reviews	2-3
San Antonio Basketball Tournament	3
March and April Meetings	4
Individual National Awards	4
Girl Scout Outreach Event	5
New SWE Senate	6
WEP Career Development	6
WEP and UT Updates	7
Calendar	8

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

I would like to thank all of our members that participated in EWeek activities. Our section was well represented at both the Austin Science Festival and Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day @ UT. Mark your calendars for a great volunteer opportunity coming up April 4th for our section's Girl Scouts outreach event. There are also ongoing opportunities to volunteer throughout the year at school visits and special events that focus on exposing K-12 to basic Engineering fundamentals for more information please visit: <http://www.centexeweek.org>

Our section has been focusing on enhancing the diversity of topics and locations for events this year and attendance has shown the success. We have had more than a few requests from members in the San Antonio area interested in having an event. I would like to open a position on the leadership team for a member from the San Antonio area as a San Antonio Event Coordinator. We do have an upcoming event that SWE has been invited to participate in by one of our San Antonio members in March that will help fund engineering career programs for middle and high school students. I encourage all that are able to participate in this worthy cause to make this event.

With the current state of the economy it is more important than ever for our section to show our commitment to our members and community. Please share with me your comments and suggestions on improvements.

Penny Parang
President, Southwest Texas Professional Section

2008-2009 Officers and Committee Chairs

Penny Parang	President	SWESWT.President@swe.org
Pooja Bhatia	Vice-President	SWESWT.VicePresident@swe.org
Laura Clymer	Secretary	SWESWT.Secretary@swe.org
Monica James	Treasurer	SWESWT.Treasurer@swe.org
Angela Nickels	Section Representative	SWESWT.SectionRepresentative@swe.org
Ashley Alletag	Section Representative	SWESWT.SectionRepresentative@swe.org
Sharda Parthasarathy	Alt. Section Representative	SWESWT.SectionRepresentative@swe.org
Pooja Bhatia	Alt. Section Representative	SWESWT.SectionRepresentative@swe.org
Shelley Stracener	Webmaster and Newsletter Editor	SWESWT.Webmaster@swe.org
Socorro Miller	Award Committee Chair	
Manali Kesarkar	Program Chair	
Katie Moses	Program Chair	
Suzanne White	Career Guidance: Girl Scouts	
Ty Parcher	Career Guidance: Science Fair	
Jennifer Vargus	Career Guidance: Science Fair	
Nafisa Muzaffar	Career Guidance: Science Sundays @ ACM	
Sarah Kirkish	Fund Development (Corporate)	
Twana Arnold	Fund Development (Corporate)	
Monica James	Fund Development (Merchandise/Sales)	
Angela Nickels	UT SWE Counselor	
Tricia Berry	Collegiate Section Liaison	

New Officers

~Shelley Stracener

Mid-term, two of our lovely officers unfortunately had to leave us: thanks for your service, Wunmi and Katie! After reviewing the section bylaws, we realized that Penny (our section president) acting as an Alternate Section Representative was not a necessary appointment, so we referenced last year's election to determine the correct office-holder. We had a special off-cycle election to fill the Secretary and Section Representative positions. Please welcome our new officers! Their contact information is listed on page 1 along with the other officers.

Laura Clymer	Secretary
Ashley Alletag	Section Representative
Pooja Bhatia	Alternate Section Representative

Holiday Social & White Elephant Gift Exchange Review

~Monica James

Our Holiday Social was held on December 13th, 2008 at McCormick & Schmick's at The Domain. SWE members, friends, spouses, and a couple of future members enjoyed great networking, a selection of fantastic appetizers and desserts to snack on, and our traditional White Elephant Gift Exchange.



Everyone had a great time since we had some very popular gifts and some not-so-popular gifts. Those members with guests were at a special advantage as they colluded to use the rules in their favor to keep the most popular: Starbucks gift cards! We wrapped up with a game of "Guess That Christmas Song" and the winners walked away with a DVD, compliments of Border Entertainment, (AKA Blockbuster Video).

A special thanks to those that attended and to those that couldn't make it, we hope to see you at another SWE event.

New Year, New You Review

~Socorro Miller

The Society of Women Engineers Southwest Texas Section (SWE SWT) started the 2009 calendar year with a session titled "New Year New You". The event took place at Nordstrom in Barton Creek Square on January 15th. The event was well attended by the professional and collegiate SWE chapters (30+ attendees). Prior to the event we met in the Nordstrom bistro for dinner and lively conversation. The event surpassed my expectations;

I expected a sales pitch and was afraid of the speakers picking on one of us, especially me, to show what was wrong with our wardrobe and how we could make it better. Instead the Nordstrom staff took the event beyond fashion: they touch on skin care tips, makeup choices, fun accessories and of course the new trends on shoes and clothing. The Nordstrom ladies encourage us to take advantage of their personal shopper service. If you like more information on this service contact Whitney Hauser at whitney.hauser@nordstrom.com.



February Networking Lunch Review

~Penny Parang

On February 12th our section hosted a networking lunch at The Cheesecake Factory which was very well attended. There was no agenda just great conversation with our members and guests. One of our members Terri Kellough gets the award for bringing the most guests for two lunches in a row! Terri has brought about a half a dozen guests to lunches to learn more about SWE. The networking lunches are great opportunities as Terri has shown to bring non-members to learn more about what our section provides by being able to network with others in the industry. The lunches are also great for those members that are looking for employment and member's whose companies are hiring to make contact. Please share your suggestions of where we should hold our next networking lunch!



Austin Energy Regional Science Fair Review

~Ty Pacher and Jennifer Vargus

A huge thanks to all who helped with the science festival effort this year. This year we awarded a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd for grade level 1 through 6 of the Primary Division with a physical prize for the 1st place in each grade. The primary judging team included Jennifer Vargus, her husband, two friends of theirs, Socorro Miller, Shelley Stracener, Suzanne White, Marsha Harrison, Peggy and Ty Pacher.

The Junior and Senior Division events went smoothly. Monica James and Peggy Pacher also helped with pre-selection the night before. That was a huge help. Because of Peggy's and Monica's input, our top prize went to the best recipient in the spirit of SWE. Thanks again to Monica and Peggy. We passed out a total of 11 Certificates of Merit in addition to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each division with a physical prize for each place winner as planned.

The first place senior division winner was actually missed in the prejudging on Wednesday but caught Ty's eye on Thursday while he was judging a preselected project next to it. She was a computer science entrant from Vista Ridge High school in Cedar Park who worked on different approaches to hiding messages in internet images with various formats. We've all read about the military implications of that. Ty noticed a judge from the Navy that was very interested in her project too. We also passed out two top awards in Math, two in Chemical engineering, and one in a branch of physics where the experimental set up was engineering oriented so the total coverage of the senior fair was good.

Ty was able to judge the Junior division by himself this year as there were no other volunteers in that time slot. We could have used a little more help with that one. He had a very big argument with himself over who should place and where in that division. After a lot of self convincing and delicate negotiating with self his best winner picks prevailed!

Suzanne White did a fine job of addressing the entire Primary Fest. It takes courage to speak in front of so many folks when we engineers don't usually do that very often. Thank you Suzanne.

We had a great team man our booth this year and it was well attended. Our Staff included Socorro Miller, Penny Parang, Tyler Parang, Shelley Stracener, and Suzanne White. This is a great opportunity to interact with lots of young students who have yet to make up their minds where exactly they want their future to take them.



San Antonio Co-Ed Basketball Tournament

~Penny Parang

This is a co-ed event and a great opportunity for our SWE members and friends to participate with other members from San Antonio. The Basketball Tournament will be held Saturday, March 14, 2009 to raise funds to give to middle school and high schools for the engineering career programs.

Tournament Location:	Spectrum at Rogers Road, 2711 Treble Creek, San Antonio, TX. 78258 Telephone No. 210-408-9050
Registration Time:	7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Playing Time:	8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Cost per Participant:	\$ 15.00
Cost for (non-player):	\$ 5.00
Rules:	Co-Ed Rules will apply with the exception that the minimum age of the player shall be 18 years of age. The Bracket System will be used.
Awards:	Trophy will be presented to 1st. Place Team and other special recognitions will be provided for each team player and participant.
Game Rules:	See Google: Co-Ed Basketball

Please contact SWE member: George Williams 210-602-3408 for more info.



March Speaker Meeting

~Penny Parang

The topic for our March event is “Social Networking – The Power of your Network!” A social network can operate on many levels, from membership in a professional society like SWE to online tools like SWE Communities, LinkedIn and Facebook. Come explore how to get the most benefit of the tools that are available and how the pros use them to maximize impact and grow their networks. This will be a fun interactive event in which you will learn the power of your network. We are still working on finalizing the date and location for the event which will be held towards the end of March. Check back at the website for updates!

April Speaker Meeting

~Shelley Stracener

A speaker meeting is tentatively scheduled for the second to last week of April. We need YOUR help to decide what topic to cover during this meeting! Do you want to improve your leadership skills, learn what to expect when getting a graduate degree, work on your professional development, or just have a time to socialize and network with other SWE members in the area? Would you prefer an event that’s in a north, central or south location?

Think about what you’d like to see in April and stay tuned to your email: a survey will be sent out in the next few weeks! If you’d like to be added to our mailing list for events and other communications, please contact our Secretary, Laura Clymer at SWESWT.Secretary@swe.org.

Seeking Nominees for the 2009 Individual Awards Program

~Suzanne White

The Society of Women Engineers strives to advance and honor the contributions of women at all stages of their careers as well as recognize the successes of SWE members and individuals who enhance the engineering profession through contributions to industry, education and the community.

SWE National is seeking nominees for the following 14 awards:

- Achievement (the Society’s highest honor)
- Upward Mobility
- Resnik Challenger Medal
- Rodney D. Chipp
- Distinguished Engineering Educator
- Distinguished New Engineer
- Fellow Grade
- Distinguished Service
- Entrepreneur
- Work-Life Balance
- Emerging Leaders
- Collegiate Member
- Collegiate Outstanding Faculty Advisor
- Collegiate Outstanding SWE Counselor



If you would like to make a nomination, please review the [award requirements and instructions](#). The deadline is **March 31, 2009 at 11:59 pm CST**. Awards will be presented at WE09 in Long Beach, Calif. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact the [Awards Chair](#).

Annual Girl Scout Outreach Program

~Suzanne White

SWT SWE's annual Outreach Program is officially five weeks away and we need your help!

What: Engineering in Action: Green Technology – Learn to LEED the Future with Engineering

When: April 4, 2009, 10:00am – 4:00pm

Where: Held at the Lone Star Girl Scout Council Headquarters, Austin, TX

Project Summary and Objective

The goal of this event is to encourage the pursuit of engineering and computer science studies by “learning to LEED the future with Engineering”. Our national rating system known as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System promotes buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work.

The girls will connect with local Women Engineers to build their own Green structure that will be LEED certified. This event ties several different kinds of engineering relating to Green Design and Renewable Energy into several activities that demonstrate how their valuable contributions can have a long-term positive impact to our environment – on both a local and a global scale.

We Need YOU!

We really want the girls to MEET the Women Engineers, so we specifically would love for the following engineering disciplines to be a part of this activity so you can speak directly with the girls about careers in:

Chemical Engineering
Software Engineering
Material Engineering
Solar Engineering

Electrical Engineering
Environmental Engineering
Structural Engineering
Wind Engineering

Power Engineering
Architects
Civil Engineering

Are you one of these? Of course, you are NOT REQUIRED to have a “Green Job” to assist with this event, we are grateful for each & every Woman Engineer who wants to participate!

We also need:

One Team Lead and One Assistant for each of these activities:

Activity #1: Green Materials Matching Game

Activity #2: Carbon/Ecological Footprint

Activity #3: Windmill Design Challenge

One Team Lead and One Assistant for each room created in Activity #4: Green Design Doll House Construction (The rooms will be put together to create the whole house.)

One Team Lead to overlook Activity #5 in the lab

Two volunteers to handle registration/sign up

Will also act as floaters during the event

Will also help set up & take down snacks & lunch

Six volunteers for Wrap Up:

Two to hands out surveys (this is critical and cannot be skipped!)

Two to exchange goodie bag for completed survey (this is critical and cannot be skipped!)

Two to hand out LEED certificates

Three to Five volunteers to clean up afterward

This will truly be an advanced and engaging experience for everyone involved, and I thank you in advance for your support and your participation. I will meet with each of you **as soon as you sign up** to go over the details for your activity, including the skill sets and objectives targeted for that activity. The activities are already set up, and you will be given everything you need to successfully run your activity.

PLEASE CONTACT ME at suzanne.white@swe.org or call me at 512.243.7961 with what you'd like to sign up for, or if you have any other questions about this program.

MANY THANKS to the National Girls Collaborative Project, National SWE Program Development Grant, and the SWT SWE Chapter for their assistance in funding this event - and for the Girl Scouts of Central TX in allowing us to help create such a bleeding edge, engaging project!





The New SWE Senate

~Angela Nickels

In FY10 the Council of Representatives (COR) will cease to exist and SWE will have a new Senate. So what does this mean?

The Senate will maintain all of the national responsibilities that the COR know holds:

- Develop and adopt long range Society goals
- Develop and adopt external policy statements
- Set Society dues
- Review and approve Bylaws changes

The Senate will be a much smaller entity than the current COR and move away from proportional sectional representation into an equal regional representation model. The Senate will meet more frequently, making it a higher functioning deliberative body.

There will be two professional Senators and one collegiate Senator for each region. Additionally, there will also be two international Senators and there can be up to two special Senators that the Senate may elect in a given year. Professional Senators will have two-year terms. Collegiate and special Senators will maintain one-year terms.

So what about Section Representatives? Yes, we will still have Section Representatives. But instead of having section, region and national responsibilities, Section Representatives will now only have section and region duties. This means that they will still be section officers and sit on the regional council. The regional representation will remain the same as it is today.

WEP Career Development Seminar

~Suzanne White



I responded to an email that **Tricia Berry**, SWE Life Member and Director of Women in Engineering Program (WEP) at The University of Texas at Austin, sent out to Southwest Texas SWE members in the Austin area. She has asked for mentors, panelists and presenters for a seminar she facilitates at The University of Texas at Austin for their undergraduate engineering students.

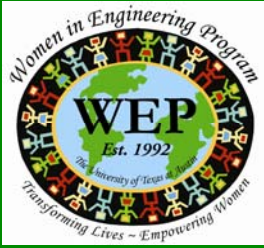
I signed up for the February 18th "Perceptions in Image ~ How You Look" class, and I found myself asking aloud, "Where were these classes when I needed them?" These courses of excellence are not part of the usual engineering curriculum and teach skills otherwise learned "OJT", "The Hard Way", and via "The School of Hard Knocks". Topics include Public Speaking, The Best Team Player, How You Play the Game, Managing Up, Politics and Networking, and Strategic Thinking.

Tricia leads each topic and integrates the professionals into the course perfectly – I believe the students actually had as much fun as we did. They are easy to talk to, and Tricia has created an outstanding opportunity for them to be exposed to "inside information". It was greatly rewarding for each professional to be able to offer advice and knowledge about skill sets that are critical to young Women Engineers (in particular) before they begin their journey into the working world.

The things we have learned on our own (or should have, at this point in time!) are now in seminar format for these lucky girls (and a few guys). I encourage you to look over the rest of the curriculum for the rest of this semester and see if you, too, find a topic of interest to you that you would share with these students. It was a wonderful, engaging experience, and I enjoyed every minute.

Check out the course plan at: <http://www.engr.utexas.edu/wep/current/careerdevseminar.cfm> (a PDF with all the seminar topics and learning objectives). If you are interested, complete the online form found at the same link (<http://www.engr.utexas.edu/wep/current/careerdevseminar.cfm>) and select which seminar(s) you would like to participate in.

Tricia should be lauded for her efforts in developing and leading such a cutting edge program. Please contact her at tsberry@mail.utexas.edu or 512-471-5650.



Swing into Spring with SWE and WEP Review

~Tricia Berry



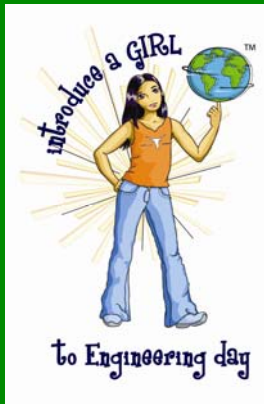
SWE – Southwest Texas, SWE – UT Austin and the Women in Engineering Program (WEP) at UT joined forces to kick off the new year with fantastic networking and discussions. Over 80 participants explored similarities ranging from music preferences to home town locations in order to find common points of interest. Discussions were fostered and new friends were made as participants explored the art of networking in this relaxed and friendly environment. Of particular interest were the tips on how to exit a conversation once you're ready to move on to interact with others. Best parting words suggested include...

"It's been great visiting with you. I need to go refresh my drink (or food)." And then off you go to get your drink or food....hopefully without the other person following you. "It's been nice talking with you. Enjoy the rest of the ____." And then just exit! "Let me introduce you to ____." And then exit!

Bottom line, participants hopefully left with a few networking tricks in their back pockets and met some new people along the way. SWE and WEP events are great places to practice your networking skills and to meet amazing people. Thanks to all who participated!

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day Review

~Shelley Stracener



The University of Texas campus was bustling with activity on February 21st when over 1,100 1st-8th grade students (mostly girls) and their families arrived in the afternoon to experience "Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day." I took the opportunity to volunteer with other SWE SWT members and students from Texas State University in San Marcos in one of the activity rooms in the Engineering Sciences building. We provided materials to the girls to build "Puff-Mobiles:" wind-powered vehicles made from life savers, straws, paper and tape. It was amazing to see that given the same materials, no two Puff-Mobiles looked alike! The girls had a great time using their creativity and the engineering design process to build their vehicles, test their designs, and modify the designs to make them faster.

Other SWE student sections that volunteered included UTSA, Southwest Texas and UT Austin. This was a great opportunity to serve our local community: thanks to **Tricia Berry** and the Women In Engineering program for coordinating this event and encouraging us to participate! I had a blast!

Update from Longhorn SWE

~Angela Nickels



Under the direction of the section President, Katherine Hull, the UT-Austin section has launched two major initiatives in FY09. The first was prior to the start of each of the long semesters, when the inaugural Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) meetings were held. The CAB is made up of section officers, corporate members (including many alumni), WEP Director, and guest Melissa Tata from the SWE Board of Directors. The CAB will meet twice a year and assist the section with working on topics of interest to improve the section. The connection to SWE leadership is also an important component, so that the collegiates get to meet SWE role models and learn more about professional opportunities in SWE. The first two meetings have been a success and have helped the section to take a step back and improve itself in a variety of ways.

The second major initiative is to start a Graduate Student group. This is being headed up by two former collegiate sections presidents, Prinda Wanakule and Anne Silverman, and is off to a great start. They have held three luncheon sessions that have been well attended. They have also hosted two graduate panel discussions for all UT engineers.

The section's them for FY09 is "Make a Difference" and every event and meeting has featured some outreach activity. They have done activities at their meetings such as making cards for sick children and adopting a family for Christmas. They have also done weekend outreach activities such as volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore and having a team participate in the Race for the Cure.



Society of Women Engineers

Southwest Texas Section 2008-2009 Calendar

September 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Sept 27 – Kick-off Brunch

October 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Oct 22 – Freescale Networking Meeting

Oct 28 – Sushi Networking Lunch

November 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Nov 2 – Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure

Nov 6-8 – National SWE Conference

Nov 20 – Speaker Event

December 2008

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Dec 13 – Holiday Social

January 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jan 15 – New Year, New You!

Jan 22 – UT SWE/WEP/SWT Joint Event

February 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Feb – Volunteer month

Feb 6-8 – Region C Conference

Feb 18-21 – Austin Science Fair

Feb 21 – Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day

March 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Mar 25 or 26 (TBD) – Speaker Meeting

April 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Apr 4 – Girl Scout Workshop

Apr 22 or 23 (TBD) – Speaker Meeting

May 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May 7 or 9 (TBD) – Scholarship and Awards Banquet