



# *Society of Women Engineers*

## *Southwest Michigan Section Newsletter*

ASPIRE.

ADVANCE.

ACHIEVE.

Issue 6

September 2005

### Message from the President...

As I write my first message as your new section president, my thoughts are reflective of the past and looking toward the future. I reflect on the great accomplishments that our section has made since before our chartering. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to making our section successful, especially the FY05 officers. Their leadership has helped to ease the transition for our new officers.

I am excited and grateful to be working with an enthusiastic executive committee in the year ahead. The executive committee has been busy during its first few months in office planning for FY06 and creating our section goals. Please take a closer look at our section goals highlighted in this newsletter.

One of our section goals that I would like to highlight is to develop career guidance activities, to increase awareness of engineering and to encourage young girls and boys in our community to consider pursuing engineering as a career. The Society of Women Engineers is the Society sponsor for E-week 2006, which takes place in February 2006. Our section, along with all SWE sections, will have an opportunity to reach out in our local schools during E-week. If you would like to help with some career guidance activities, please contact Michele Paustian (Michele\_A\_Paustian@Whirlpool.com). Michele is our new Career Guidance Chair, and you can learn more about Michele by reading our member spotlight article in this newsletter. Thanks, Michele, for volunteering for this position! With Michele's leadership and additional support from our members, we can make a difference in young people's lives and positively impact the engineering field in the future.

I would also like to personally thank all of our members who have volunteered to be committee chairs. There are still several committees in need of chairs. All of the committee roles are listed in this newsletter, including both those that have been filled and those that are still open. If you would like to help with any of these committees, either as a chair or as a member, please let me know (Carrie\_A\_Dickinson@Whirlpool.com).

For those whom attended August's section meeting on financial planning presented by Kara Isaacson from *Ameriprise Financial Advisors*, I hope that you found the topic as informative as I did. We are also planning a winery tour of Southwest Michigan on October 8. I will probably be traveling on business during this event, but I encourage those interested to attend. This should be a great opportunity to get to know some of your fellow SWE members in a more social setting. Also, check your email for other upcoming section events.

I would also encourage you to attend the SWE national conference coming up November 3-5 in Anaheim, CA. In addition to many informative seminars offered and a chance to network with other SWE members, you won't want to miss the Region H meeting. Our section will be receiving the FY05 Region H Membership Retention Award at the region meeting. Our membership retention was 100%. Way to go Southwest Michigan! If you haven't yet renewed your member dues for FY06, please don't forget to renew soon. Let's keep up the great work from FY05!

As I close this message, my final thoughts turn toward our fellow SWE members across the U.S. whom have been affected by the recent devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Let us remember that we are all part of the SWE family; and I ask that our Southwest Michigan family please join me in keeping all of our SWE sisters and brothers, especially in the Gulf Coast of Region C, in our thoughts and in our hearts.

*Carrie Dickinson*

# 52 section members!



### Book Review by Lisa Chutorash

"Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office: 101 Unconscious Mistakes Women Make That Sabotage Their Careers" By Lois P. Frankel

Even if you aren't looking to get the corner office, this book contains eye-opening advice that gives the reader a different point of view of work-related behaviors that anyone could be accused of at some time or another. The author is NOT trying to tell women to be unpleasant or 'tough.' The main purpose is to communicate that some mannerisms can be read inaccurately. The purpose of this (and most self-help books) is primarily to bring unconscious or learned behaviors to consciousness. The author gives ways that some behavior can be interpreted and how, when used frequently, they can affect your reputation in the workforce. When used effectively, the advice the author gives is proper for any gender. Although occasionally the advice contradicts itself, common sense can help guide a reader to either a solution to the mistake or just awareness that others do notice specific mannerisms. Overall, the mistakes highlighted are generalizations and one person may only be deficient in a handful of them. I would recommend this book to all professionals looking to advance in their careers, as long as the advice is taken with a light heart.

### SWE Member Spotlight on Michele Paustian

By Michele Wilcox



Michele Paustian is a Benton Harbor native. After graduating from Lake Michigan Catholic in 1999, she attended Western Michigan University. During her freshman and sophomore years at WMU, there wasn't an active SWE section on campus. Several students got together and decided to revitalize the section during her junior year. Michele was actively involved in the section planning meetings. Once the section was revitalized, Michele enjoyed participating in events that the section did with the local Girl Scout troops.

Michele excelled in math and science in high school, and her guidance counselors steered her into the engineering field. She also had a wonderful role model at home as her dad is an electrical engineer at Whirlpool. Michele remembers several "Take Your Daughters to Work" Days when she would come to work with her dad and play around in his lab. This is why Michele chose to study electrical engineering at WMU. She graduated in December 2003 with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering.

Michele did several internships at Whirlpool while she was home for the summers. Her first year she worked on the water subsystem of the Calypso washer, testing the pump and recirculation systems. Michele moved to the Calypso controls group for her second internship. Her responsibilities during her second summer included verifying software for the wash cycles and testing the user interface. She spent her third summer in the washer cost and quality group, where she focused on control board component and user interface cost reduction projects for the Calypso. Michele transitioned over to the Saguaro dryer project during her fourth summer, where she worked on the development of a new temperature-sensing component. She continued to work on the Saguaro project during her final summer and while she was in her last semester at school. When she graduated, she was hired into the Dryer Controls and Sensing group and continued to support the Saguaro dryer platform. She is currently responsible for the drying algorithms for the Saguaro platform.

Michele has been active in the local section of SWE. This year she has been chosen to be the Career Guidance Chair for the section.

Michele had a busy summer this year as she got married on June 4, 2005. She and her husband live in Kalamazoo. In her free time, Michele likes to play volleyball and softball, spend time with her friends, work out, and garden and decorate at her new home.

### Upcoming Events:

- October 8, 2005 – Wine Tour, Social event from 10 AM until 1 PM. \$5 to cover the cost of the tour. RSVP to Lisa Chutorash ([Lisa\\_N\\_Chutorash@whirlpool.com](mailto:Lisa_N_Chutorash@whirlpool.com), 923-0226) by September 30 and include interest in car-pooling.
- 2005 SWE National Conference-
  - Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California.
  - Thursday, November 3, 2005 – Saturday, November 5, 2005
  - **National Conference Early Bird Deadline Extended to September 30, 2005**
  - To register online go to [www.swe.org/2005reg](http://www.swe.org/2005reg).

## Thoughts from an Expat – by Binglai Chen

Somewhere on some website, or in some psychiatrist's best seller book, lists the most traumatic experiences an adult person can go through: New job, moving to a new place, death of a loved one, a divorce etc. I can't say I've experienced all or even most of them, but in the past year, I think I definitely have been through some traumatizing experiences!

I was fortunate enough to accept an expatriate assignment as the Quality Manager in the Whirlpool International Purchasing Office in Shanghai, China. What an exciting opportunity. I heard bells and saw fireworks when I was first approached about this assignment. Countless friends and colleagues congratulated me as I packed up my belongings to head out to this grand new beginning. From my very first Whirlpool PDP (personal development plan) written back in 2001, I can clearly locate the area where I opted happily to take on a global assignment with relocation. That was such an easy decision to make on paper. I kept on thinking how much of an adventure it would be and how great it would be for my career. Of course, those things still ring true.

It was perhaps an easier decision for me since Chinese is my first language. I did not face the additional challenges of going through day-to-day life in another country with a completely foreign language. What made the decision harder was thinking about the drastic transition awaiting my "all American" husband George and 130lb. English Mastiff – Genghis. I battled the flash backs of one detergent commercial in the 90s of a Japanese lady bringing all of her husband's favorite t-shirts with their move back to her "homeland." Was that all they needed to complete that transition? Was that going to be the happy ending for us as well?

Forget about leaving the home we have built and lived in for the past two years, or the wonderful friends we have made since moving to Michigan. We were even ready to part with all the comforts of Stevensville and St. Joseph: having 24hr grocery stores, a big yard for our dog to run in, all English cable channels (containing channels we liked and actually watched), out door grilling, good pizza! Our own vehicles to drive at will. (Though we do not miss the sky rocketing gas prices.)

So, with nine suitcases and an uncertain future, we arrive at the Shanghai PuDong international airport on a wet, cold December day. We transition from a small village with one blinking light (Stevensville, MI) to the largest city in China, a metropolis of over 16 million people. Shanghai is every bit a city like New York or Chicago on steroids with over 300 skyscrapers. We were immediately introduced to the wet, cold winter there. Who would believe that Shanghai was colder than Michigan?! We truly experienced the saying "The wind goes through you." We made the leap from our two-story house to an apartment on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor boasting an amazing view of the developing city.

Nine months have now passed. People first told us that the first 3 months were going to be the hardest. Then after 6 months, we would never want to leave. I would be lying if I didn't say there were nights when I cried and missed everything about Michigan. There was no clear indication that we finally fit into this place or that we can finally call Shanghai our new home... but somehow, we are no longer counting the days and hours to when we'd get back home to the US. There are many clubs, associations and organizations that are targeted for the Global Expatriate. We are getting to know others and make some friends. Slowly, we are discovering specialty shops that carry small reminders of home: Chips-a-hoy chocolate chip cookies, Betty Crocker brownie mix and Pop Secret's microwave Popcorn.

We find ourselves loving Shanghai, the culture, the energy and its people. Whirlpool China employs some of the most talented people. They are all very eager to learn and share their varied experiences. They love to speak English, in hopes that it gives them a chance to practice and perfect their pronunciation. We realize just how hard it is to work and operate in a distant division that is thousands of miles away from a company's headquarters. From weekly evening teleconference calls lasting till midnight to fighting for resources to make a project happen, that being a leading global manufacturer is not an easy task. While working in North America, participating in those phone calls, I rarely thought or appreciated that the regular 8AM Global teleconference calls was someone else's precious evening half way around the world. I remind myself often that it is an honor and privilege for me to come work in this distant land. Perhaps my sole responsibility is to be a resource to those here, and recap my experiences back to the US. My main responsibility is to show how things are done in North America and what I can do to make their daily tasks that much easier to accomplish. Each day, my accomplishments are different. One day, it could be helping someone figure out the right English translation for a word, phrase, or thing. The next day, it could be navigating through the company's intranet to locate a test specification. From major strategic meetings to small birthday celebration meetings, the results are all the same – making a difference and bringing a smile to someone's face.

George and I decided that we would make the best of our time here. This morning, as our vehicle weaved in and out of the morning traffic like water flowing around rocks in a river, I clear my thoughts amidst the blasting honking of horns and look away from the truck that just made a left turn from the right lane crossing 3 left lanes on a red light and smile.

### Section Goals for FY06

- Provide section's major event information to the Region secretary for posting on the Region H calendar and/or for region email announcements
- Whenever appropriate, provide information regarding members' achievements to Region Secretary for posting at the region level
- Offer at least one technical program for the year
- Provide support to SIGs, if there are any within or near by section's geographical area; include SIG members in section's activities
- Support the E-week program (plan to send engineers out to meet with educators and their classes on "the" day, or any other during E-week)
- Use revised strategic plan to create FY06 tactical section plans
- Review and draft section level bylaws when the template is released
- Identify membership segments and provide value programs to meet their needs (evaluate our section meetings to include non-Whirlpool members with different meeting times/locations/days)
- Work with the Leadership coach and identify at least one area for improvement (work with Leadership coach on succession planning for our section)
- 85% membership retention
- 13% membership growth
- Have at least one program/meeting with local collegiate sections
- Help find SWE counselors for student sections (Melissa Radocha continue as counselor for WMU)
- Increase the number of volunteers by 15%; get at least 2 new members to step up as committee chairs (challenge goal from Governor)
- Ensure the section complies with the SWE and section bylaws (challenge goal from Governor)

### July 2005 COR Report

by Melissa Burchill

The first Council of Representatives (COR) meeting for Region H was held via teleconference on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The main topic of discussion was goal planning for the sections and the region. The SWMI section goals for the FY06 fiscal year are outlined in a separate section of this newsletter.

**Region Goals.** Some of the goals for Region H this year include bettering the professional development programs in the region, increasing communication between sections, increasing interaction between professionals and students, increasing interaction with special interest groups (e.g. Student sections, SHPE and NSBE), participation in E-week, and membership growth and retention.

**FY05 Region H Awards.** Every year, the region gives awards to sections and a few individuals for some of their achievements. These awards will be given out during the Region H meeting at the National SWE Conference. In addition to a certificate, the recipient receives a \$50 award. The goal for next year is to have every section apply for at least one of these awards. The awards given for FY05 are as follows:

- Significant support – Caterpillar
- Distinguished Service Award – Lisa Henn from the Wisconsin section
- Career Guidance – Detroit section
- Professional Development – Minnesota section. An honorable mention went to Central Illinois.
- Innovation award – Central Illinois section
- Continuous Improvement – Wisconsin section. An honorable mention went to the Minnesota section.
- Membership growth – East Central Iowa section (31% growth)
- **Membership Retention – Southwest Michigan section (100% retention)**

**E-week.** SWE is one of the official sponsors of E-week this year, and the theme is "Connecting Educators to Engineering." All sections are strongly encouraged to have a special E-week activity coordinator for all of the E-week activities. Sections should conduct their usual E-week activities, and National SWE may also be distributing some "kits" that can be used for special additional activities. More details will be coming later. Check out [www.eweek.org](http://www.eweek.org) for more details on E-week.

**Upcoming COR activities.** There will be several COR meetings during the SWE National Conference in November. Not all of the topics are known yet, but some that will be discussed include the unique value of women in the workplace, SWE's Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG), and Mega issues. The next Region H COR teleconference is September 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Interesting Information.** A literature review that is a good source of information on women and engineering was done by SWE and can be viewed at [www.swe.org/stellent/groups/website/@magazine/documents/webdoc/swe\\_002314.pdf](http://www.swe.org/stellent/groups/website/@magazine/documents/webdoc/swe_002314.pdf)

#### Officers:

President – Carrie Dickinson  
Vice President – Melissa Radocha  
Secretary – Lisa Chutorash  
Treasurer – Christine Strain  
Section Representative – Melissa Burchill

#### Committee Chairs:

Membership – Michele Wilcox  
Career Guidance – Michele Paustian  
Diversity – Mike Van Sickle  
Newsletter Editor – Binglai Chen  
Website Coordinator – Fatima Dhayanandhan  
Continuing Development – **Open**  
Publicity – **Open**  
Mentoring Coordinator – **Open**  
Social – **Open**