



## ROCKY MOUNTAIN SECTION NEWSLETTER

### Letter From The President

Welcome to the reboot of our RMS Newsletter! I'm pleased that we are bringing back this format of communicating the events and highlights of our section. It's an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the accomplishments of our members, and to give you information on upcoming programs, while giving you a little reading material on the section as a whole.

2012 has been a big year for SWE RMS events! In March, several members attended the **Regional Conference** in Tulsa, OK. Between speakers from JPL and interesting sessions on everything from improving your management skills to statistics, this conference broke some records for attendance. Next year's regional conference will be in Omaha in March—we'll be posting registration information here soon.

In April, we hosted 1,000 girls in the Colorado Convention Center for our **GESTEM event**—where they tried out a variety of hands-on activities related to engineering. GESTEM is already gearing up for plans this spring. If you're interested, the planning team can always use more volunteers. We need people to help raise funds from corporate partners, to organize the volunteers who present the hands-on projects, and to work the day of GESTEM. Contact Heather Doty ([link](#)) to get involved—this is currently our biggest need for volunteers, and we look forward to making this the biggest and best GESTEM ever!

Throughout the year, SWE RMS members have been getting together across the Front Range at our Networking. We have events in Fort Collins, Boulder, Westminster, Denver, and South Denver/Littleton. (You'll see these in our weekly emails where you can sign up [here](#))

Lastly, our goal for 2013 is to strengthen our corporate partnerships. We have had great success in holding events that bring established women's groups at engineering companies together with SWE RMS members. At these events, we are able to decrease the total cost to members by using corporate spaces and utilize corporate sponsorship. The networking at these events strengthens the connections between existing groups that serve to support women in engineering careers. If your workplace sounds like a great fit for this kind of program, please contact Anna Meck or Laurie Valaer, our Program Coordinators through our website, on the Leadership page.

We look forward to seeing all of you in 2013 at SWE events! Please enjoy our newsletter, and please send in your ideas for future articles.

Sincerely,

*Madalene Fetsch*  
SWE RMS President FY13

Volume 56 Issue 1

### IN THIS ISSUE

Letter From The President .....	1
RMS News .....	2
RMS Showcase .....	2
Member Spotlight .....	3
RMS News Cont'd ...	4-5
Member Appreciation Event .....	5
Solar Mamas .....	5
Upcoming Events .....	5

**Interested in joining forces with SWE?**  
We are always looking to collaborate with local businesses. Contact [Madalene Fetsch](#) for more information.

## SWEeter Futures By Polly Kuhner

SWEeter Futures is a program that tracks the impact we are having as we strive to bring more women into the field of engineering. This is accomplished by connecting SWE members to volunteer opportunities and partners, providing greater visibility into the important outreach work that we do, and recognizing members for their efforts.

It is a unique online portal that tracks our individual and collective impact on the future of engineering. Every hour you spend planning or doing outreach activities/events will help demonstrate the impact of SWE's outreach, help improve the work we do, share best practices, and raise money.

Through this reporting, SWE will be able to publicly recognize our outstanding contributors in outreach at the individual and section levels with honors, awards, and even grants.

Visit [www.swe.org/sweeterfutures](http://www.swe.org/sweeterfutures) for more information and to sign up for an account. Once signed up, you can view SWE Outreach Events, sign up to volunteer, and you can track your volunteered hours.



## COLLEGIATE CHAPTER NEWS

Announced at the WE12 Annual Conference on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, several schools within the Rocky Mountain region walked away with high accolades. The Celebrate SWE! Event recognized the following schools and awards:

- The Colorado School of Mines won the Excellence in Membership Retention Programs and the Collegiate to Career Award
- The University of Colorado at Boulder won Outstanding New Member Recruitment Programs.

In addition to these outstanding accomplishments, Region i won the Region Membership Award. Congrats to our local collegiate achievements!



## RMS SHOWCASE

In an effort highlight the accomplishments of our RMS Members, we developed a "showcase" to bring attention these exciting milestones:

- **Chris Tippett** welcomed baby Cooper John Tippett (7 lbs, 15 oz) to her family on Sept 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- **Casey Griswold** married Scott Waggy on Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Have any special accomplishments, awards or exciting news to share with the section? Contact [Claire](#) to include it in the next issue!



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Hi there! Your friendly neighborhood newsletter editor here to give you a warm welcome to our new publication. As a recent college graduate (go Cal Poly Mustangs!) and Californian transplant, I knew I wanted to become involved with the SWE Rocky Mountain Section as soon as possible. Now that I'm here, I'm super excited to take on the newsletter and bring you the latest news on our sections' initiatives in addition to connecting us with our local collegiate sections. As an Industrial Engineer I am an advocate of continuous improvement ☺; so if you have any suggestions for content revisions or additions, please feel free to reach out to me.

ENJOY! - CLAIRE

# RMS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

RMS Members Polly Kuhner and Jessica Ayers offer a glimpse into their lives as women engineers. Read more to find out about what these amazing women do both inside and outside of SWE!

## POLLY KUHNER

**City of residence:** Commerce City

**SWE seniority:** 13 years

**Alumni:** University of Colorado at Boulder (BS ME), Regis University (MBA)



**First involvement with SWE?** I became a member of SWE when I started college.

**What have you enjoyed the most about SWE?** The SWE National Conference is great! I also love the many opportunities that SWE gives to young women pursuing degrees and careers in math and science.

**What is your current position and what are your goals for the upcoming year?** I am currently one of the Outreach Coordinators. I am still learning about the position and will have a clearer picture of my goals as an Outreach Coordinator in the next month. For the time being, we are working on getting volunteers for a variety of outreach events that are coming up in the next few months.

We are also working on the organization and participation at these events. One of our goals is to incorporate more math/science tutoring opportunities for local schools. It is going to be a new and exciting year and I look forward to working with SWE to increase our presence in the community from an outreach perspective. There are currently many volunteer opportunities out there and I would encourage everyone to help with these wonderful opportunities.

**Current occupation?** I work at Merrick & Company, an Architectural/Engineering Firm located in Aurora, Colorado. I am a Project Manager for our National Security Facilities Group.

**Outside of SWE and work, what hobbies interest you?** I love skiing, photography, swimming, and traveling.

**If you could have any super power, what would it be and why?** To fly!

## JESSICA AYERS

**City of Residence:** Denver

**SWE seniority:** 13 years

**Alumni:** Colorado School of Mines (BS ME) + (MS Environmental Science & Engineering)



**First involvement with SWE?** At Mines, most of the female engineering students were SWE members. It was a place we could go on a weekly basis and see that there really were other women on campus.

**What have you enjoyed the most about SWE?** I really value the boundless opportunities to promote women in STEM programs and to make a positive impact in the community. I appreciate a forum where there is solidarity amongst my female peers.

**What is your current position and what are your goals for the upcoming year?** SWE Outreach Coordinator Co-Chair. Polly and I are working together to develop a plan for the upcoming year. As a woman in a male-dominated field, I want to do everything possible to encourage young people, especially females, to believe in themselves and to pursue their dreams, regardless of gender. Any activities that support that agenda are my priorities. *If any SWE members have ideas for potential Outreach activities, please don't hesitate to contact Polly or me!*

**Current occupation?** I work at Stanley Consultants as a Mechanical Engineer. I work primarily on power plant projects. This includes air pollution control equipment, pipe stress analysis, and most recently equipment procurement contracts for a reciprocating engine plant.

**Outside of SWE and work, what hobbies interest you?** I love the mountains and any activities I can pursue in that environment – skiing, mountaineering, hiking, road biking, trail running.

**If you could have any super power, what would it be and why?** The ability to breathe underwater and withstand pressure at extreme depths.

# GESTEM EVENT

\*GESTEM (*Girls Exploring Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*) will be held **Friday April 5, 2012** at the Colorado Convention Center, from 7:30 am to 2:30 pm (time may vary).

GESTEM seeks to introduce hundreds middle school girls to the exciting possibilities of careers in STEM fields through hands-on experiences and interactions with technical professionals.

We are seeking workshop presenters to provide interactive sessions for girls ages 11-14. We have 31 workshops available in each of 3 sessions for a total of 93

opportunities. Offering the same session during multiple time slots is totally welcome! We can also help with workshop ideas if you are interested and willing to present but need help with a topic. We also are looking for up to 155 volunteers to serve as guides and mentors for small groups (8-12) of girls through the day.

You can also join our planning team! Please indicate your area of interest when you sign up. More information available on the SWE-RMS website ([www.swe-rms.org](http://www.swe-rms.org)).

## COOKIE EXCHANGE HOLIDAY PARTY

We hope all of you will join us at our very next SWE RMS event... a holiday party!

At this event, we'll be doing a cookie exchange—bake a couple dozen of your favorite holiday cookies, and bring them by to swap, share and enjoy! Printed recipes are encouraged, too – getting to learn new cookie recipes is part of the fun.

The event will be hosted in Denver's Union Station neighborhood on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Email [Victoria Owens](mailto:Victoria.Owens@swe-rms.org) to RSVP and get directions.



## ENGINEERING TOYS FOR GIRLS

By Claire Lyles

We all know a large disconnect between young girls and their perception of the word “engineering” still exists. In an effort to bridge this gap, several new prototypes and kits have been developed to motivate an early interest and skill set for girls. Such toys are the GoldieBlox and Roominate kits which are designed to inspire the inner artist, engineer and architect among the young girls who play with them.

Designed by Stanford Engineer, Debbie Sterling, it was her mission to develop the GoldieBlox toy because growing up she felt the word “engineering” was representative of

all things boyish and nerdy. The premise behind GoldieBlox involves a construction toy and book series featuring the main character Goldie. Targeted towards the 5-9 year old age group, as girls read along the story, they use belts and spools to build what Goldie builds.

In addition to GoldieBlox, the Roominate toy functions slightly different in that it offers a scalable platform for young girls to design, build and play with their creations.



The GoldieBlox Toy



The Roominate Toy

Without being overtly educational, the Roominate educates its users through the underlying aspects of STEM.

Toys such as these pave a new trend in product design and education for future generations. By linking the gap between education and play, GoldieBlox and Roominate are just a few of the ways we can inspire the next generation of female engineers and innovators.



## WINE, CHOCOLATE, APPETIZERS, OH MY!

By Judy Neyer

The SWE RMS Section hosted its First Annual Wine, Chocolate and Appetizer Member Appreciation Event on August 29, 2012 in Broomfield, CO. at the Marquis at Town Centre Party Room.



The atmosphere was inviting and entertaining like being in someone's kitchen and the ambiance of lighted poolside setting. Fourteen members attended and each had a chance to win a Basket of Chocolate Favorite from The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory! Donated chocolates for tasting from The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in Boulder and Keith Mason a friend of SWE donated Ester Price Chocolates from Cincinnati, Ohio!

The Member Appreciation Event was flowing with wine, sushi, cheese, crackers, grapes and chocolate made the event—not to mention the hungry pallets of our RMS members!

Everyone mingled around the food and wine and had a great time getting to know each other. Since the event was such a great success, we're planning on making this an annual happening!



## FILM ON SUSTAINABLE ENGINEERING EDUCATION

By Sonya Reiser

Sonya Reiser, SWE-RMS Vice President, participated as moderator on a panel discussion about the groundbreaking documentary "Solar Mamas" put on by Rocky Mountain PBS at Denver Film Center (2510 East Colfax) on Sunday, November 18 at 2pm. The film is part of Community Cinema, a groundbreaking initiative featuring free screenings of *Independent Lens* documentaries in more than 95 cities nationwide. Colorado is proud to host 12 of these screenings, bringing together leading organizations, community members, and public television partners to learn, discuss, and get involved in key social issues of our time.

Solar Mamas focuses on women from impoverished communities in the Middle East who travel to India to learn how to create solar panels that can then be used for a wide variety of mechanisms, such as cooking equipment, lighting, and basic electrical needs. The screening was followed by a panel discussion and dialogue with the audience.

In addition to Ms. Reiser, the following women participated in the panel discussion:

**Tamra Ryan**, CEO of the Women's Bean Project

**Karen Sugar**, Founder and Director of the Women's Global Empowerment Fund

**Deborah Keyek-Franssen**, Director of academic technology at the University of Colorado Boulder, Director of the Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology (COLTT) conference, and Co-Director of the Colorado Coalition for Gender and IT.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SWE RMS Holiday Cookie Exchange

Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> (at 2pm)  
Email [Victoria Owens](#) to RSVP  
and get directions.

### FIRST Lego League ULA Colorado Championship

Saturday Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>  
@ Auraria Event Center 1010 Larimer St, Denver CO 80204

### GESTEM (Girls Exploring Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)

Friday April 5, 2013  
@ The Colorado Convention Center, from 7:30 am to 2:30 pm (time may vary).