



Society of Women Engineers

Southwest Idaho Section

2009 JANUARY

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For upcoming events,
see the calendar on
our section's web site

Generous offer from North Wind, Inc.

by Jane Francis

Here's an opportunity you should read about NOW. The sooner you respond, the better. The deadline to contact me is Friday, January 16.

Sylvia Medina, an engineer who founded North Wind, Inc., of Idaho Falls, is hosting a table at the 2009 Gala of the Boise chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO).

At this event, four awards are given to business women: Business Woman of the Year, Business Woman of the Year Up and Coming, Trailblazer, and Leader. It is inspiring to hear about the women who are not only successful in business but also leaders/mentors in the community.

Our own past president Layne Simmons received the Trailblazer award two years ago after she cofounded TenXsys.

Ms. Medina sponsored a table for eight, and she is graciously giving 5 tickets (regular price \$50 each) to our SWE section. Enjoy a nice dinner, listen to a keynote speaker, and learn about the award finalists. The Gala is held at 6 p.m. on Saturday evening, January 24, 2009, at the Grove Hotel.

Let me know if you're interested in attending. Phone 284-2373 or write to jane@boisecomputertraining.com

Officers review section news

by Jane Francis

Section officers met in December to review activities and plan for the rest of the year.

National Conference

Alonna Scott, our section president went to the SWE National Conference in Baltimore last November.

- As alternate Section Representative at the conference, she participated in a big discussion of how to decrease the size of the Section Rep team. The vote passed. There will be only two reps for each region. Our section may not have a rep. However, our votes will be represented by the Region J Representatives.
- Hewlett-Packard, her employer, paid for the trip. While there, she recruited for HP.

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- Later she gave a presentation to her fellow staff members regarding conference events.

Industry Roundtable

The goal of this event-in-the-making is to have higher-level managers and human resources personnel from the area meet together in a closed session to discuss recruiting and retaining women engineers. HP, Micron, Idaho Power, and Motionetics have already committed to participate in the roundtable. Other than the participants, only the SWE moderator would attend. This allows the participants to be more candid with one another.

Seeking New Programs Chair

We're looking for someone to plan SWE professional development programs. We came up with some interesting and fun ideas for this year—it only remains to implement them. Monthly time commitment varies according to the event that is being planned, but we estimate that it generally takes 10-20 hours in total to coordinate and put on an event, and much of this time can be delegated to other members of the committee or other officers. Professional development events occur about bi-monthly. As many of you know, it is very rewarding to put on an event that connects and encourages other women engineers, and this is also a great opportunity to make connections with other engineers and practice leading and coordinating events in a low-pressure setting.

Thank you, Stephanie Williams, for all of your hard work for SWE.

Scholarships

- Scholarship fundraising is under way. Letters were mailed to Southwest Idaho companies in early December and committee members are following up with phone calls.
- Applications were mailed to all high schools in Idaho, and are due March 1st.

Outreach Activities

- We welcome ideas for short activities to do with various grade levels
- During recent school activity, 5th grade girls stayed involved, but 6th grade girls had already receded.

Profile: Mary Jane Miceli

by Stephanie Baldwin

Striving for excellence

Striving to excel and to prove to herself that she can accomplish her goals is an underlying motivator for Mary Jane Miceli. She was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as Mary Jane Bauter. Her father was instrumental in her becoming a computer science major at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Jane says her dad treated her like an upcoming little engineer even when she was young.

Though Jane has faced some resistance in her efforts to become an engineer of computer science, she has not let that stop her. She first faced a hurdle in high school when she told a teacher that she wanted to work with computers. He asked her if she could clean computers. Jane went onto tell him that yes, as



Mary Jane Miceli

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a programmer she has used virus checker programs. It was explained to her later that was not what the teacher meant.

Applying at the university

She did not let another person's doubts stop her, even when applying to the masters program at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. One of her professors asked if she would rather want to get married and have a family versus pursuing a master's degree. Jane started her masters program without the professor's assistance, and completed her degree last year while living here in Boise.

Jane's mother has long emphasized education as she is a teacher with her own master's degree. With three children, it seemed likely that one of them would become a teacher. However, Mrs. Bauter had to wait until Tim Miceli joined the family to have another teacher in the mix. Three years ago Jane married Tim Miceli, whom she had met in a computer science class while he was working on an electrical engineering degree. Later he switched to civil engineering, which led to teaching at Mrs. Bauter's prompting. Tim Miceli now teaches in Caldwell while Jane continues with computer science in both her profession and her education.

The work world

The couple resides in downtown Boise. Jane's job with Hewlett-Packard brought them to Idaho in June of 2007. Jane's position was part of the restructuring at HP in August of 2008, so she recently pursued other opportunities. She now works for Bodybuilding.com as a Quality Assurance Engineer. Jane is busy learning about online business while contributing to her new company. Though it is a switch from her focus on firmware coding at HP, Jane is looking forward to getting more experience on web-based software coding.

With encouragement from her mother as well, Jane is continuing her education by seeking a PhD in Computer Science. This time around she is enrolled at Boise State University with plans to transfer her credits and complete her program at the University of Idaho. Her residency, which is a requirement while doing her research for her dissertation, will be in Moscow, Idaho. Jane commented that she might have stayed with the BSU program if she was more interested in electrical engineering, and if her husband's credits could be transferred to her. Unfortunately not all items are shared in a marriage, so Jane is completing her own classes.

Advice

When asked what advice Jane would share with other women pursuing engineering she said, "Don't let anyone tell you what you can't do, or even let them imply it to you."

She continued to say not to take what other people say to heart. Jane commented that she might have cried the day she realized that sexism still exists and how painful it is, but she didn't let it stop her. In fact, she happily sent graduation announcements to both of the "Doubting Thomases" in her past.