

Members At Large

FY15 Newsletter, Issue 4

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President's Corner

EWeek was held just a few months ago, and we had many MALs participate. The MALs in Redding, CA held a successful event for the 6th year in a row! If you didn't participate in an EWeek event this year, this article will inspire you to add it to your goals list for next year. Remember that the [MAL outreach assistance program](#) is available to help support your event!

We're in the home stretch of FY15. It's time to start thinking about the Annual Conference in Nashville, TN. In this issue of the Newsletter, look for some testimony on why the MALs attend.

The MAL awards deadline is approaching (June 15) and the awards program is highlighted in this issue. I encourage you to nominate yourself or someone you know that is deserving of the awards.

This is my last corner so I want to thank everyone for all of their work in making FY15 a good one for the MALs. I especially want to thank the officers, representatives and other members of the leadership team. I bridged a gap, the succession plan is back in place, and the organization is poised for stability, continuity, and growth. Please continue to step up to and support not just the challenges faced in the MAL organization, but in all aspects of our lives.



Fran Stuart
FY15 SWE MAL President
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Redding EWeek 2015 Event

By Ashley Kellogg, SWE MAL Contributor, Photographs by Mary Lascelles

The 6th Annual Wow! That's Engineering event was held on Saturday, February 21st on the Simpson University Campus. The event was hosted by the Proposed Section of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and is held during National Engineers Week each year. With 101 students in attendance the event was the largest to date for the group. Outside of the 100 girls in attendance, there were also 75 students on a waiting list who had hoped for a spot.

This annual event enables local 4th through 6th graders to explore various areas of engineering via three hands on workshops. The workshops are rotated each year so that returning students won't experience the same workshop twice. This year we welcomed back the highly requested Egg Drop workshop. The girls were given a specific amount of supplies, including newspaper, straws, tape and balloons, with which to design a vessel to protect a raw egg from a free fall. The most successful designs achieved protection at a drop from 11 feet!

Along with the egg drop, the girls were also able to design a roller coaster for a marble. They were provided with a set space on a wall, limited supply of cardboard tubing and foam tubing and challenged to send the marble on the slowest journey from the designated height to a paper cup. We saw some extremely creative designs and the longest coaster took nearly 7 seconds to descend 5 feet vertically.

Our third and final workshop was graciously hosted by Build It Redding. With a generous donation of Kano computers by a local family, the students were able to see the workings of a computer with a lesson in hardware. The students then had the opportunity to write their own Scratch programming with the help of Build It staff and provided laptops.

At the end of the day the girls took home not only some awesome lessons and experiences from the workshops, but goodie bags and prizes as well. Prizes were awarded for the most successful designs in the Egg Drop and Marble Coaster

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Egg Drop Workshop participants engineering a protective vehicle for their eggs (bottom left). Students learn about how computers work (bottom right).



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workshop. Nine individuals also received recognition for demonstrating competencies such as teamwork, confidence and communication that are essential to success as a professional. Amazing prizes and goodie bag items were provided by Girls Inc, Build It Redding, Redding Electric Utility (REU), Knauf Insulation, College Options and North State STEM. The event was also made possible with support from REU, Lehigh Cement, CH2M HILL, Knauf Insulation, Boundary Waters Screen Printing and of course Simpson University with the donation of the venue. Event planning is accomplished by 8-10

dedicated SWE members with 25 additional volunteers, including students, donating their Saturday to ensure success.



Redding MALs host their 6th annual National Engineers Week event—the largest to date!

Workplace Bias

By Mary Isaac, Region B MAL Representative

While at the Region B (Sonora) 2015 conference over the weekend of February 27 in lovely San Luis Obispo, CA (about halfway between LA and SF), I attended two sessions on a topic that we all thought had been put to bed, but obviously has not: bias in the workplace. Bias can be good if you are the one receiving the benefits (favoritism) or bad if you are the one being biased against (discrimination). While blatant discrimination has been squashed at most publicly traded or funded U.S. companies thanks to legislation, unconscious bias has taken its place and continues bias's insidious work of promoting inequity to support the status quo.

In two different but related sessions, Deb Willems and Karla Carichner, both from the Sonora region, explored the issue of unconscious bias, which affects us all to some degree. Whether we like it or not, we are all operating with some degree of

cultural and personal bias that we are not even aware of or we're being judged from a biased perspective and found lacking in some capacity. For women in engineering and technology careers, there are really two biases at play: women and careers (slightly weaker), and women in engineering and technology, the latter more tenacious over the last 40 years.

Deb's presentation was higher level and interspersed with videos of gender-biased commercials and advertisements demonstrating the challenges with managing how media portrays females as leaders (or not) and evolving our own identities (along with our children's) as compared to media representation of reality. She briefly touched on recent research indicating that the battle is far

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from over, with one study (Moss-Racusin, et al., 2012) examining science faculty bias in hiring a lab manager based on resume only, different first names (male favored, higher salary), and the other demonstrating the 5X improvement in hiring of female orchestra members after auditions were conducted behind a screen (Goldin & Rouse, 2000).

Karla's presentation was more focused on the specific challenges facing women engineers, including the fact that one year after graduation only 37% of female engineers are still working in engineering or technology, while nearly 60% of males are. Fortunately, engineering is one of the spaces where pay is equitable (at least from a significance standpoint). Karla suggests we all take the [Implicit Association Tests](#) on gender / careers and gender / science to calibrate our

own attitudes about who should do what. We may think we must be unbiased, but unconsciously, that may not be the case.

She also encouraged us to watch [Susan Colantuono's TED talk: 'The Career Advice You Probably Didn't Get'](#), where she discusses her theory of 'the missing 33 percent' (business and strategic financial acumen) in the career success equation for leaders. The other two-thirds are self-development/branding and engaging others. Human Resources typically overemphasizes, and women exceed at, the latter 2/3, which businesses have been focused on from an equity standpoint for the last 40 years, so it is no wonder we still can't seem to penetrate the higher levels.

Your Brand and Social Media

By Diane Peters, Region H MAL Representative

One of the sessions at the Region H SWE Conference was a presentation by Rebecca Reck, currently a graduate student at the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign, on “Your Brand and Social Media”. She began by talking about what a personal brand is, and had everyone do an exercise in which they chose three words that describe them. These can be the core of a personal brand statement. She then shared her own brand statement, “I am a determined, goal-oriented engineer who strives to find innovative ideas.”

After talking about personal brands, she spent quite a bit of time discussing social media, and how to use it effectively. One of the things she did was present a slide with logos, and asked people how many of them they recognized. The first thing I noticed was that there are a LOT of different types of social media – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Google Scholar, various blogging platforms, specialized applications for creating profiles for academics, and many that I wasn't familiar with. It's just

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not possible for everyone to keep up with everything out there!

Some of the social media Rebecca mentioned were ones that I personally use, like LinkedIn and Google Scholar, but there are plenty of others I've never touched. It was interesting to see how many options there are. Of course, one option is simply to have your own website, and Rebecca suggested establishing one, with an appropriate custom URL. Her own website is rebeccaee.com, where the "ee" could stand for "electrical engineering" or for her current research area, "engineering education". Her website is actually tied to some of the social media accounts she has – it showcases a blog, Twitter feed, and has links to various other places. One of the points she made several times was that it's necessary to look at your website on different browsers, to make sure that it looks the way you want others to see it.

Rebecca had a lot of different tips for social media use, more than I could even begin to list;

several of the ones that stuck with me the most dealt with tweeting and retweeting, mentioning others' posts, and engaging in a respectful conversation. She advocated tweeting when at conferences, using the conference hashtag, in order to participate in a conversation about the conference; retweeting is part of that conversation, especially when someone adds a comment to something they retweet. Mentioning others' contributions fell into the same category of conducting a conversation, and she made the point that you need to keep the conversation respectful. While one would hope that no one would need to be explicitly told not to swear at others in their posts, this isn't the case – some people do need a reminder.

In light of Rebecca's own use of social media, it's not particularly surprising that she plans to post her conference presentation online – she told everyone in attendance that the presentation would be posted on [her Slideshare page](#), so if anyone is interested in learning more about social media usage, check it out.

Collegiate Transitions and Reflections on Career Choices

By Diane Peters, Region H MAL Representative

SWE's Region H conference was held on March 6-8 at the University of Notre Dame. One of the Friday night events at the conference was the Collegiate Transition Event. This was set up as a speed mentoring event, with 17 professionals sitting at tables, and collegiates close to graduating rotating through the room to talk to them. The professionals were in different fields and career paths, and were at different stages in their careers. Some were fairly new professionals, while others had long-term careers. The collegiates were given information on each of the women, including their educational history, current employment and employment history, history within SWE, and other interests. This allowed them to decide who they wanted to talk to based on the questions they had.

As one of the professionals participating in the event, it was interesting to hear what types of questions the collegiates had. Some of them wanted to know more about SWE as a professional and how I had gained from my

“[Do] not ... assume that anything is wrong if you change your mind and change your pathway... Everyone changes, and a situation that was perfect at one point in life may no longer work at a different point.”

membership. Others wanted to know more about my career trajectory. One young lady noticed that

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my hobbies include quilting and woodworking, and since she had an interest in trying woodworking, she was interested to learn how I had gotten into it. Yet another young woman was considering a doctoral degree, and chose to talk to the professionals who had doctorates, so she could learn more about the process.

It was interesting to look back on my own path, and see how universal some of the questions are that I had to face. Some things have changed, of course; while subtle bias still exists, overt discrimination is less common than it once was. Other things haven't changed at all. Graduating seniors still face uncertainty over what path they should take, and where it will lead

them. One piece of advice which I gave to many of them is not to assume that anything is wrong if you change your mind and change your pathway. Fifteen years ago, I never would have predicted where I would be today, or what my life would be. Everyone changes, and a situation that was perfect at one point in life may no longer work at a different point. In addition, the world changes around us, and opportunities that don't exist today will appear a few years from now.

The event was a great addition to the conference, and hopefully will be repeated in the future. If you're asked to participate as a mentor in the event, I'd highly encourage it – the hour flew by, and I really enjoyed it.

State of SWE Summary

By Mary Isaac, Region B MAL Representative

The Region B (Sonora) 2015 conference was held in beautiful San Luis Obispo north of Santa Barbara over the weekend of February 27. The attendees were fortunate to have Executive Director Karen Horting there to talk about the State of SWE, where she shared that, thanks to the fairly new Employer Sponsored Membership (ESM) category, the Society's membership is nearing 35,000!

In ESM, a company/employer (with at least 200 employees) pays 15% of the current dues (\$100) for the total number of engineering employees

(TNEE) as annual dues; individuals who work at those companies no longer need to fund their own memberships. For instance, if Company A wants memberships for 250 engineering employees, their annual dues for those 250 SWE members is $0.15 \times 250 \times \$100$, or \$3,750, regardless of whether employees were in the vicinity of a section or a Member at Large. In the past, individuals either paid \$100 each for professional membership or, under the corporate sponsorship package, employers would have paid

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"Thanks to the...Employer Sponsored Membership (ESM) [program], the Society's membership is nearing 35,000!"

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\$5,000 for nine (9) memberships, four (4) conference registrations, and other benefits.

Karen also mentioned the strategic importance of SWE's globalization initiatives and our growing recognition as the voice of women in engineering and technology worldwide, thanks to our evolving participation in Washington through our partnership with Association for Women in Science. Believing that there is strength in numbers (over 50,000 strong), SWE and AWIS brought in public policy liaison Yvonne Rodriguez, PhD, to serve as our joint voice to the world regarding educational and workforce equity issues that affect us all.

Speaking of workforce equity, Deb Willems and Karla Carichner, both from Region B, did a great job of digging into the issue of unconscious bias, which affects us all to some degree: we are all operating with some degree of bias that we are not even aware of and/or being judged from a biased perspective and found lacking in some capacity. For women in engineering and technology, there are really two biases at play: women and careers (slightly weaker), and women in engineering and technology, the latter more tenacious over the last 30 years.

Nominations for MAL Awards Due June 15

By Stacey Culver, MAL Awards Chair

The Members at Large organization strives to recognize MALs for various accomplishments. We are currently seeking nominations (as well as volunteers to serve as judges) for the 2015 MAL awards program.

Nomination packages, accompanied by the [nomination form](#), must be submitted by June 15 for three awards. You may nominate another deserving MAL, or, if you feel you would be a good candidate, please have a colleague or friend nominate you since the nominator does not need to be a MAL (or even a member of SWE).

Rising Star Award

For professional MALs with less than 8 years of work experience

Shining Star Award

For professional MALs with between 8 and 15 years of work experience

Outreach Award

For collegiate or professional MALs who participated in outreach activities during the fiscal year

Details about the program and requirements for preparing nomination packages can be found [here](#).

If you would be available to judge the MAL awards (Best Newsletter Article, Rising Star, Shining Star, and/or Outreach) please contact MAL Awards Chair [Stacey Culver](#). Serving as a judge will most likely take several hours this summer. Thank you for taking the time to acknowledge our members for their exceptional contributions!

Why I Attend the SWE Annual Conference, And Why You Should, Too

By Emily Ongstad, MAL Newsletter Co-editor and MAL Contributors

If you're reading this newsletter, you know that the MALs are challenged by geographic diversity. This can make communication difficult, as we resort to phone or email for meetings where Professional Sections get the luxury of meeting face-to-face. It's not easy to go through the normal phases of team building over the phone. Building relationships with our fellow MALs is also tough. But there is a place where we get a chance to meet all our fellow MALs in person – the Annual Conference.

Last year at the Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California, it was brought to my attention that MALs may attend their region conferences, but don't always attend the Annual Conference. Region Conferences are generally closer, so are less of a financial burden and they require less

time away from family and work. There are many MALs whose employers do not finance their trip to the Annual Conference, yet they enjoy attending so much, they're willing to use vacation days, take time away from their families, and dip into their own precious savings to make their way to wherever the conference may be that year. Whether it is for financial or personal reasons that keep you away, I wanted to share a message of all the benefits (and fun!) of attending the annual conference.

I asked for help and inspiration from other active MAL members who routinely attend the Annual Conference. The response was overwhelming! Most replied with "sorry I couldn't write just a few sentences – I got too excited!" Hopefully I can pass on that excitement to you.

"I've only missed three SWE annual conferences since 1974, when I attended as a collegiate section president. That conference (they were called conventions, then) in Dallas solidified my commitment to SWE. So many women engineers and engineering students in one place! The variety of sessions and tours, the opportunities to network and share experiences, and the energy and diversity of members, were inspirational then – and still are today."

-Claire Shortall, MAL Treasurer

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“I enjoy seeing SWE friends from everywhere. I enjoy seeing what the companies are working on. I enjoy supporting the Over the Hill Suite.”

-Fran Stuart, MAL President

“I attend to connect with SWE friends I only see once a year, to stay relevant with trends in professional development, and be an inspiration for my students and other female engineers.”

-Jacquelyn K. Nagel, MAL Secretary

“I enjoy attending the SWE Annual Conference for the networking. It's tremendous to get the chance to talk to thousands of other smart, talented women. I enjoy presenting sessions and sharing what I know with others, meeting with old friends and making new ones, and introducing my students to SWE. Region conferences are nice - they're a much more intimate experience, since they're smaller - but they don't pull the same range of members in as you see at the Annual Conference.”

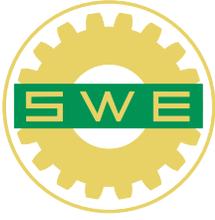
-Diane Peters, Region H MAL Representative

“You get the opportunity to meet and spend time with your fellow MALs, find out what the MALs are up to and where you can get involved. The variety of sessions gives you the opportunity to hear from members from all over the world, share ideas, and learn new skills. You can hear about what it is like to work for a company not in your geographic location, so it opens your mind to different work cultures. The career fair is the largest I have been to: there are so many different industries represented, which gives members the chance to learn about many career paths. I have met so many wonderful people from all over the world that I would never have met otherwise. Many of these people are now close friends with whom I exchange ideas about SWE, work, and life.”

-Debbie Jacklitch-Kuiken, MAL Vice President

“My favorite thing about attending the Annual Conference has been getting to meet so many interesting people from all over the country and all levels of SWE. At the Annual Conference you get exposure to all the resources and benefits that SWE offers. The variety of tours, workshops, and speakers is amazing-there really is something for everyone. I can't wait to meet you in Nashville this October!”

-Tori Tinsley, MAL Outreach Chair



Society of Women Engineers

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Stay Connected!



As a MAL, it can be difficult to stay connected to SWE. Find us on social media and online to stay in the know about MAL and the Society!

Find the Members at Large on [Facebook](#); find SWE on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn.com](#) (join: "Society of Women Engineers (SWE)") and check out the [Monthly SWE Newsletter](#).

Help Wanted!

Awards Judges: If you're interested in judging the MAL Awards packets, please contact MAL Awards Chair [Stacey Culver](#).

Newsletter Contributors: Looking for articles 200-1000 words to include in future newsletters. A broad range of possible topics include but are not limited to

your local outreach events, career tips, leadership, mentoring in your workplace, etc. Additionally, the MAL Leadership will recognize their favorite article with the MAL Newsletter Article Award at the end of FY14! If you would like to contribute, please send your articles to [Emily Ongstad](#). This is your newsletter!

MAL Calendar

MAL Awards Deadline	June 15
WE15 Annual Conference for Women Engineers, Nashville, TN	Oct 22-24
MAL Summit	Oct 21
MAL Meeting	Oct 22