

The Gear

Serving the 298 Members of the SWE-WI Section

Jan - 2024

SWE-WI 50th Anniversary Celebration

(Continued on pages 2 and 3)

On Saturday, December 2, 2023, forty-four professional and collegiate Society of Women Engineers (SWE) members and supporters headed to the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee campus, to the same building the Wisconsin professional section of SWE was chartered in, 50 years ago! With long gowns and suits, attendees gathered for a celebratory luncheon, networking bingo and a formal presentation. Event leader Andrea Falasco spearheaded the effort and set the scene by decorating tables with pine boughs, twinkling lights and various award plaques the section had received throughout the years.

SWE-WI section “herstorian” Betty Leonhard provided a non-stop pictorial slide show that included over 90 slides of section memorabilia from the past 50 years. She highlighted events from the 1973 chartering year such as gas prices being 39 cents per gallon and McDonalds introducing their Quarter Pounder with Cheese. She explained that SWE-WI was originally chartered as the Milwaukee SWE section, and years later expanded to the Wisconsin section where our territory currently encompasses most of the state of Wisconsin plus the upper peninsula of Michigan.



SWE-WI Past Presidents and Current President

Key Upcoming Events

- 2024 WELocals – various cities – Feb-Mar 2024
- Spring Forward 2024 – La Crosse – 4/13

Stay up to date on all SWE-WI events at our [Google Calendar \(link\)](#)



Inside this Issue

SWE-WI 50th Anniversary Celebration 1

Attend WE Local 2024 - Registration Open! 4

Scholarship Judges Needed 5

Amazing SWE-WI Role Models at Whitnall Trades Day 6

SWE-WI Outreach Future Volunteer Opportunities 7

SWE-WI Outreach Policies 8

Spring Forward 2024 Speakers 9

SWE-WI Book Discussion 10

SWE-WI Ornament Exchange 11

SWE-WI 50th Anniversary Celebration (continued)

Article by SWE-WI Membership Chair – Susan Thomas Schlett
Dec '23

As Membership chair I shared some of my fondest memories as a SWE-WI member beginning with my term as section president, hosting the SWE annual conference in Milwaukee in 2004 while eight months pregnant with our third child; working with newsletter editor Andrea Cole and seeing the section receive the Best Newsletter Award; and challenging my outreach committee in 2006 to create a 6th grade essay contest. The essay contest asked students to create a vehicle that ran on items other than fossil fuels. The committee stepped up to the challenge and contacted every public and private school in Wisconsin, and in return received over 100 essays! Essay entries ran on everything from mower grass clippings to cheese (not too surprising on the cheese since it is Wisconsin!). Awards were given for the best entries and members traveled to schools to make many of the presentations. SWE-WI received the Connecting Educators to Engineering award during National Engineers Week that year, out of more than 200 professional sections.



SWE-WI Members with 25+ Years SWE Membership

I also recalled my interview several years ago with one of the SWE-WI charter members Elizabeth Bastian. Elizabeth was the first woman to graduate with an engineering degree from Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) (see attached photo). Elizabeth, along with Lillian Leenhouts (the first woman in WI to become a licensed architect and a SWE Fellow) along with others started the SWE section.

To conclude the program, I expressed why I have remained an active member of SWE. “Of all the working engineers in the United States, we are lucky if 14% of those are women; the number was 8% when I graduated in the 80’s. SWE is more timely now that ever. You don’t need to be a woman or an engineer to join SWE. If you want to see more women in the engineering workforce and in the classroom we encourage you to join SWE where a portion of your SWE dues goes directly back to your local SWE section to support incredible efforts like outreach, professional development and scholarships!” I went on to recognize past section presidents, life members, past award recipients and presented certificates to 23 ladies who have more than 25 years of SWE membership. Two members of note have more than 50 years of SWE membership: Marcie Strahl has 52 years of SWE membership and spent many of those years in the aerospace industry. Marilyn John has 50 years of SWE membership. She served as SWE-WI president in 1982 and began her mechanical engineering teaching career at UW-Milwaukee in 1956.

We hope this event inspires other SWE sections to celebrate their chartering anniversary!

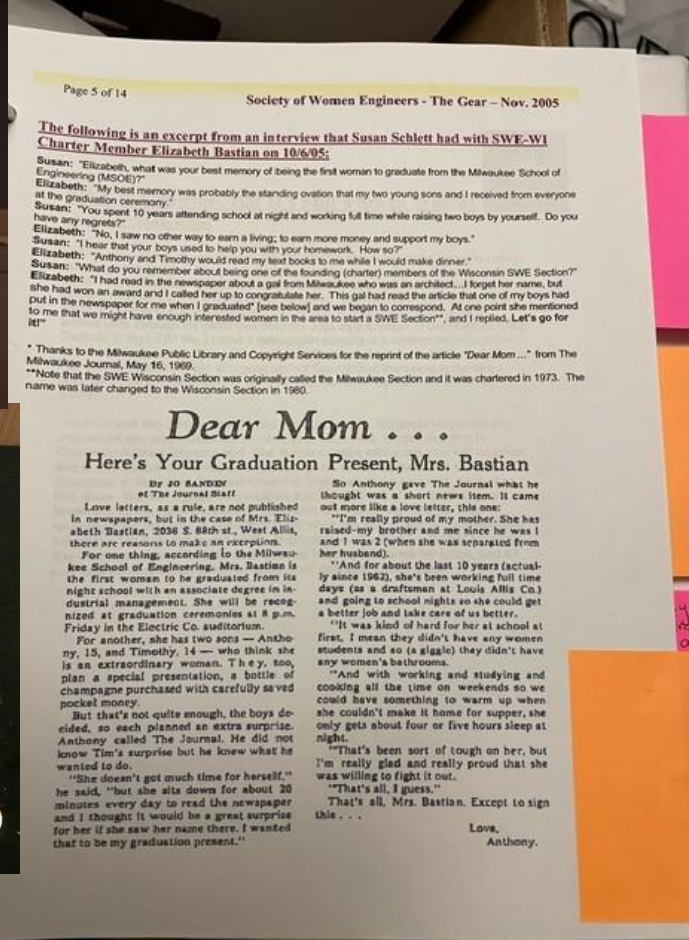
SWE-WI Newsletter Entries

Send us your stories! We want to see what our professional SWE-WI and affiliated collegiate SWE members are up to! We are looking for events that SWE has hosted, member milestones, interesting articles/books to share, and more! If you have something you want to see in the newsletter, please fill out the following Publicity Request Form and check ‘The Gear Newsletter’.
SWE-WI Publicity Request Form: <https://forms.gle/CztqytTXYQB2hK6JA>

SWE-WI 50th Anniversary Celebration (continued)

More Photos of SWE-WI 50TH Anniversary Celebration. Special thanks to Andrea Falasco, Betty Leonhard, Susan Schlett, and everyone who helped make the event happen!

Link to SWE All Together blog post: <https://alltogether.swe.org/2023/12/swe-wisconsin-anniversary/>



Attend WE Local 2024 - Registration Open!

Attend WE Local 2024 at various locations in early 2024! Registration is open for all 5 locations so register early to claim your spot!

WE Local Conference Locations and Dates are as follows:

- **Las Vegas, NV** - February 23 - 24
- **Baltimore, MD** - March 1 - 2
- **Wichita, KS** - March 15 - 16
- **Bengaluru, India** - April 18 - 19
- **Munich, Germany** - April 25 -26

Visit <https://welocal.swe.org/> for more information and to register for WE Local! If you're planning to attend a conference, let Kyela know at kyelaspecht@gmail.com. SWE-WI hopes to see you at one of the conferences!

WE LOCAL HOME ABOUT ATTEND WE LOCAL LOCATIONS PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES RESOURCES CONTACT SWE

Connecting You Locally All Around The World.

FIND YOUR WE LOCAL

WE Local conferences take place around the world and are organized by the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) to bring together participants in all stages of their collegiate and professional journey. The conferences create space for engineers and partners to connect through professional development sessions, inspirational speakers, networking opportunities, and more.

Save the Date - Spring Forward 2024!

Spring Forward is an annual professional development event that SWE Wisconsin hosts each spring. Its a great opportunity to connect with professional and collegiate SWE members from around our region, learn from the great talent in our Section, and celebrate achievements from FY24

Spring Forward 2024 will be on **April 13, 2024** in **La Crosse, WI**.

Scholarship Judges Needed

Respond by 1/31

Several professional members are needed to assist in reviewing collegiate applicants for several scholarships to be awarded Spring 2024.

This activity will be conducted via conference calls, internet, & email so this is a great opportunity to help our future women engineers in a short-term activity, regardless of geography. Overall time commitment should take no more about 4 hours in total.

Optional judge training will take place in the evening on the week of February 12 via teleconference. Specific days and times will be provided at a later date. Training recording will also be available.

The scholarship judges will be asked to review the applications and return scores by February 26th.

If interested, please contact Gretchen Borden, Scholarship Chair by **January 31st**, at sweWisconsin.scholarships@gmail.com

About – Martha Maxwell Scholarship Fund

For those who knew her, Martha Maxwell was a fun-loving enthusiast who loved to make light of any situation. She was passionate about SWE and loved to share her passion with young women starting out in the engineering field. Martha's career took her through industrial engineering and manufacturing roles, most recently as a Project Engineer in the Advanced Manufacturing department at Rockwell Automation. She also was an active member of SWE-WI for many years, and served in numerous leadership positions, most recently as Section Representative. In August 2012, Martha passed away after a battle with cancer.

To honor Martha's memory and continue fostering her excitement about engineering, math, and science for young girls and women, SWE-WI has created a memorial scholarship fund in Martha Maxwell's name. The goal is to raise funds for \$1000 scholarship will be awarded to SWE collegiate members attending school in Wisconsin or the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Donations to the Martha Maxwell Memorial Scholarship are accepted via check or PayPal. Any questions can be directed to the SWE-WI Scholarship Committee at sweWisconsin.scholarships@gmail.com .

To learn more about the SWE-WI Scholarship or to apply, visit <https://wisconsin.swe.org/scholarship/> .



2024 WE Locals located in the US:

- Las Vegas, NV - February 23 – 24
- Baltimore, MD - March 1 - 2
- Wichita, KS - March 15 – 16

For more information or to register, visit: <https://welocal.swe.org/>

Amazing SWE-WI Role Models at Whitnall Trades Day

Six amazing SWE-WI role models were at Whitnall Trades Day on November 15. Whitnall High School hosted the event for 15 area schools with more than 600 students in grades 6-12 participating. This year's emphasis was on Women in the Trades.

Almost 100 students stopped by SWE-WI's table to learn more about engineering. It's great to have the opportunity to interact with students to tell them more about engineering and show the diversity in engineering. Ann Krieger summed it up by saying it was a great opportunity for "meaningful talks with students and excellent networking among our SWE-WI team!"

Tremendous thank you to Ann Krieger from Rockwell Automation, Bree Boswell from Harley Davidson, DeDe Nelson from SPX Flow, Mary Turner from Caterpillar, Megan Johnson from Generac, and Michelle Ballard from Case IH for taking time out of their day to be role models for aspiring engineers. Additional kudos to Michelle for being the point person on the day and bringing in her test stand for students to interact with. Thanks also to Whitnall HS for inviting SWE-WI to participate.



SWE-WI Outreach Future Volunteer Opportunities

Engineering Role Models Needed!

Would you like to be an engineering role model and inspire young people to consider engineering? Look at our upcoming outreach events and save the dates for an opportunity to Be That Engineering Role Model!

Future Outreach Events

- **January 20th** - Future City Special Award Judge (Milwaukee)
 - Girl Scout STEM event (West Salem, WI)
- **February 3rd** - Women in STEAM Hands-on Event (WISH) booth with FTC qualifier (Brookfield)
- **March 3rd** - Girls & STEM Day Booth at Discovery World (Milwaukee)
- **March 15th** - Engineering Machine Design Contest Special Award Judge (EMDC) (Milwaukee)
- **April 26th** - Contrapt Special Award Judge (Waukesha)
- **May 10th** - Contrapt Special Award Judge (Milwaukee)

Interested in being a role model at future events or have other events to add to the list? Contact Heidi at swewioutreach@swe.org Watch for eblasts for opportunities to sign-up for future activities.

**SWENext
Membership**



SWENext is a way to become part of SWE as a student through the age of 18. Joining is free, any student 13 or older can become a SWENext on their own, for those younger than 13, a parent will need to be the primary contact. When registering for SWENext use event code: **Wisconsin**
Learn more about SWENext visit: <https://swe.org/k-12-outreach/swenext-2/>
For any SWENext questions, contact: outreach@swe.org

SWE-WI Outreach Policies

Outreach Volunteer Notice

SWE has implemented a Youth Protection Policy. This year to be a volunteer at a SWE-WI sponsored event you must have completed the Youth Protection course and provide a SWE Certificate to the organizer.

Please consider taking the youth protection course early and sending SWE-WI a digital copy of your certificate. This course will need to be taken every three years. To access the course, or for more information please visit <https://swe.org/youthprotection/>

Outreach Involvement

If you have been involved in an outreach event and are a SWE member, send information about the event to Heidi Balestrieri at swewioutreach@swe.org so we can report the information in the SWE outreach tool.

Information needed for the report: event name, date, all SWE sections that were involved, description of event, breakdown of girls and boys who participated, age of students, number of adult guests, number of SWE member volunteers, number of other volunteers, any partner organizations involved, or any other information to share.

Girl Scout STEM Badges

Would you be interested in working with a Girl Scout Troop and introducing a girl to engineering? The Girl Scouts have introduced new engineering and STEM badges and troops are looking for engineers who would be willing to help them earn these badges. For information on how to be involved, project ideas, and how to find a troop contact swewioutreach@swe.org



Engineers Week is coming up February 18-24, 2024. This is a great opportunity each year to celebrate how engineers make a difference and inspire the next generation of engineers! The 2024 theme is “Welcome to the Future”.

To learn more about engineers week and for ideas on how to celebrate, visit: <https://discover.org/programs/engineers-week/>

Spring Forward 2024 Speakers

Call for Participation by 1/31

Spring Forward 2024 is coming up on April 13th in La Crosse! Spring Forward is SWE-WI's professional development day where members come together to network and have the opportunity to improve their professional development skills through workshops and sessions. If you are interested in speaking at a session, please contact Jennifer Black (Jennifer.Black@tranetechnologies.com).

From last year's survey, members are looking for talks on negotiating, research on careers of women engineers, talks aimed at different times during a career, and technical talks. Other ideas are of course welcome as well. Please send a brief abstract of a topic to Jennifer by **January 31st** if you are interested!

To learn more about Spring Forward, check out: <https://wisconsin.swe.org/news-and-events/#spring-forward>



Photo from Spring Forward 2023

New SWE Awards Program

SWE has announced a new awards program to better reflect its strategic focus areas, recognize women and allies at all career stages, and simplify the award categories and application timelines.

To learn more or to apply for the FY24 Awards Program (Applications open through March 1) visit: <https://swe.org/awards/swe-awards-program/>

SWE-WI Book Discussion

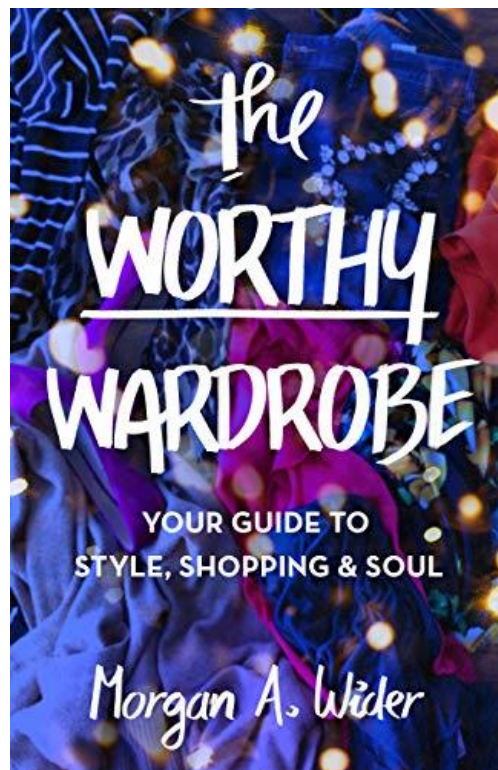
Join SWE-WI for a Virtual Book discussion in March! This is a great opportunity to connect with other SWE members virtually while uncovering and discussing the book "The Worthy Wardrobe" by Morgan Wider. Even if you don't get the chance to read the book, please feel free to join us for conversation and sharing your perspectives on this topic.

Tuesday March 19th 12:00PM-12:45PM

A link to virtual meetings (Google Meet) will be sent out based on responses to this survey.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1d5plMaYD2P79fqsQJ5xpLdyBj48JDyZZm1L9KXLtS_o/edit

Any questions, please reach out to Raquel Reif at raquel.reif@gmail.com.



SWE-WI Advertisement Information

Are you a company looking to show your support of SWE-WI, advertise on our website or in our newsletter, or post a job opening? If so, we want to hear from you. If you are interested, please find additional details and fill out the contact form on our corporate involvement page of the SWE-WI website:

<https://wisconsin.swe.org/corporate-involvement/>

SWE-WI Ornament Exchange

Several SWE-WI members participated in a handmade ornament exchange in December. Thanks to Andrea Falasco for coordinating and for all members who participated! Some photos of this year's ornaments can be seen below.

