

The Gear

Serving the 360 Members of the SWE-WI Section

Mar - 2024

SWE-WI Milwaukee Meet-Up

On February 21st, several SWE-WI and MSOE SWE members met at the 3rd Street Market Hall in downtown Milwaukee to enjoy good food, meet new faces, and play corn hole on an indoor field! Thanks to all who attended the event, and special thanks to Maureen Duthie for planning! If you have an idea for a local SWE meet-up, feel free to submit directly to the [SWE-WI publicity request](#) or reach out to anyone on the SWE-WI executive council!



Key Upcoming Events

- Spring Forward 2024 – La Crosse – 4/13
- WE24 – Chicago, IL – 10/24-10/26

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



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SWE-WI Mid-Year Strategic Planning Meeting

On January 28th, SWE-WI leadership met for the section's mid-year strategic planning meeting. The team reviewed progress on goals for the first half of the year, discussed items to focus on for the second half, evaluated status of section budget, and wrapped the meeting up with updates to the calendar.

If you are interested in getting more involved with SWE-WI, check out the role descriptions at <https://wisconsin.swe.org/about-us/#org-chart>. To run for an FY24 elected position, please send a brief bio and headshot to Allison Neuser at allisonneuser@gmail.com by April 14, 2024.

Pictured: Maureen, Kyela, Susan, Sam, Gina, Michele, Heidi
Not Pictured (virtual): Andrea, Raquel, Katie, Jennifer



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 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

Contrapt Special Award Judge

- April 26th – Waukesha
- May 10th – Milwaukee

Volunteers are needed for the Contrapt Middle School Competition. Judging will occur between 9:30 am-12 pm on Friday, April 26 at WCTC in Waukesha or Friday, May 10 at MSOE Kern Center in Milwaukee. SWE-WI awards the Most Innovative Step Award, instructions and a rubric will be provided to judges - no prior experience is needed. Area middle school students have created an overly complex contraption to roll dice. Please go to the following link to sign up <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E4CAAEE2BA75-48174034-contrapt> or contact Heidi at swewioutreach@swe.org

Girl Scout Outreach

April 10th or 24th – Manitowoc

Looking for outreach volunteers in the Manitowoc area interested in talking to Girl Scouts about engineering and doing a hands-on activity. SWE will provide the materials and training. The troop meets on Wednesday nights (6 or 6:30) at the Manitowoc library. Looking at two dates in April (10 or 24)- first volunteer(s) can choose the date. Contact Heidi swewioutreach@swe.org if interested.

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

WE Local 2025 Cities Announced

Save the Date - The 2025 cities hosting WE Local conferences have been announced:

- **San Jose** – February 28 – March 1, 2025
- **Cherry Hill** – March 7 – 8, 2025
- **Milwaukee** – March 14 – 15, 2025

Gretchen Hein – Retirement Celebration



PLEASE JOIN US FOR
**GRETCHEN HEIN'S
RETIREMENT
CELEBRATION**

**For 26 years of teaching, mentoring,
and advising.**

**MARCH 29, 2024
FRIDAY | 5:00 - 7:00 PM
ROZSA LOBBY**

Tales of Business Travel

By Sam Billetdeaux

Disclaimer – all observations/tips are my own from one short trip, your mileage may vary!

Having never left North America before in my life, when my manager asked me to travel to China this March, to say I was nervous would be an understatement. Knowing it would be a great opportunity, somehow, I convinced myself to say yes. Apprehensive but intrigued, I embarked on the long journey to China, a 4hr flight from ORD to LAX followed by a 16hr flight from LAX to HKG. We stayed overnight in Hong Kong, did a little exploring the next morning, and then made our way to Dongguan via high-speed rail for the work week.



Took the Peak Tram up to Victoria Peak for a spectacular view of Hong Kong

Making it over to the office to meet team members I had only worked with virtually for several years was an invaluable experience. It was also eye opening to witness manufacturing processes firsthand and meet with suppliers to see their capabilities. Each day I was able to come away with a page of notes on improvements and suggestions for our team to consider on future projects or continuous improvement.



Starbucks mugs in China

Outside of the day-to-day work, it was fun keeping an eye out for collectibles during the journey. In particular, I collect Starbucks mugs from different locations. I enjoyed finding Starbucks stores along the way, seeing all the different designs they had, and ended up with a few souvenir mugs in my bag on the way home.

Another neat experience was being in China on International Women's Day. At the office, there were decorations and all the women received flowers. It was great to be appreciated by the global team and participate in the celebration!



Flowers for International Women's Day

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/>

Tales of Business Travel (continued)

By Sam Billetdeaux

Disclaimer – all observations/tips are my own from one short trip, your mileage may vary!

A few tips and tricks I took away from traveling to Hong Kong and mainland China:

- Visiting a travel clinic before departing (referral from primary care provider) was helpful for guidance and recommendations **this is not medical advice**
- Liquid IV was very helpful to stay hydrated on the plane and while in a new environment
- Octopus Card Tourist app was helpful for both the subway (MTR) and many shops in Hong Kong
- Most locations in mainland China did not take card or cash, Alipay or WeChat Pay are the main options (anecdotally, Alipay has worked better than WeChat Pay)
- Most public bathrooms encountered in mainland China were squat toilets, but all locations I visited had one stall with a “western” toilet – keep an eye out!
- The combination of a lot of polished stone floors and humidity led to slippery situations – ended up wearing gym shoes the full trip for better grip
- Business cards were very important at supplier visits, give/accept with two hands and treat received business cards with care

Overall, I found the trip impactful and rewarding. I got to know the team in-person, celebrate global successes, and gained a clearer understanding of the manufacturing processes. I have already realized improvements in my weekly interactions with our global team. On a personal level, I surprised myself with how far I was able to go beyond my comfort zone and was so proud to make it back home after the trip and be able to say “I did it.”

Keep an eye out for an upcoming SWE-WI event later this spring to discuss business travel and working with global teams hosted by a group of SWE-WI members!



High-Speed Rail



Hong Kong

**Spring Forward
Registration
Closes 3/31!**

Don't miss a great opportunity for professional development, networking, and more at Spring Forward on April 13th in La Crosse, WI! See the full event schedule and register for the event before March 31st at the following link:

<https://wisconsin.swe.org/news-and-events/#spring-forward>