



# Society of Women Engineers

ASPIRE • ADVANCE • ACHIEVE

## PITT SWE IN ORLANDO: WE10 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The WE10 Conference was held November 4-6 in Orlando, Florida this year, and a few of our SWE members here at the University of Pittsburgh were lucky enough to attend. They were able to chat with other SWE members from around the United States and got a lot of new ideas for future SWE activities.

Pitt's SWE members discussed Engineering Day with members from Kansas State. They shared ideas for hands-on activities and how best to organize the day. They revealed problems they had with getting each group to come up with individual designs during their own Engineering Day. Two solutions that helped involved making it more competitive. If a dollar system was added or different materials were provided to the students, they were more likely to come up with their own innovative ideas.

The discussion with Kansas State also extended to how we can



From top Left: Emma Wolff, Mary Beth Biddle, Lisa Volpatti, Julia Wasas, Maria Legato, Maria Christine Kretzing, Danielle Pooler, Diana Huang, Jacklyn Conley, Sandy Liu

help children in Kindergarten through twelfth grade when it comes to math, science, and other engineering related subjects. A lot of their experience in this area shows that when you combine actual math problems with hands on examples, the students gain a greater understanding of key concepts.

There was a Region G meeting at WE10 as well. There Pitt SWE learned about opportunities available to SWE chapters in our region, many of which our members were not aware of before. These included possible grants that can go toward future projects and programs.

Additionally, members were able to explore Orlando. They had dinner at B. B. King's Blues Club with live music and dancing. Also some went and explored Disney and Universal Studios in their free time.

Talking to SWE members from around the United States provided Pitt SWE with many potential new ideas. Because of this year's conference, we can move forward in making our Engineering Day and mentoring programs more helpful to the students who participate. The possible Region G grant could pave the way for additional projects to be added in the coming semesters.

by Marcy Fischer

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Monday, December 6th, 11 am - 5 pm** ~ Blood Drive for Central Blood Bank in 102 Benedum

**Wednesday, December 8th, 5:30 - 7 pm** ~ Holiday Party in 102 Benedum:

Decorate a ginger bread house, win prizes, bring some spare change to donate to United Way's Toys for Tots, or bring in a goofy item from home to exchange with another member!

# Have a Good Break!

**Wednesday, January 12th, 5 pm** ~ Welcome Back Meeting & Housing Panel:

Ask questions about where to live next year including dorms, apartments, neighborhoods, etc!



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**EVENING WITH INDUSTRY**

William Laboon, from C4 Systems, spoke to us at our December Evening with Industry. He shared with us his experiences in industry and his female boss' and his own observations on the glass ceiling phenomena.

Mr. Laboon received his Bachelors in Computer Science from the University of Pittsburgh, and compared the work he did at Medrad, which was a little more hands on and directly lead to medical products, to the work he does now

as a Project Head at C4 Systems, which is more organizational and a bit more removed from the hard engineering. Mr. Laboon is also pursuing a Masters Degree in Software Design and Management part time at Carnegie Mellon.

It was interesting to hear, that in his experience in industry, there appeared to be



no glass ceiling. He told us that the vast majority of his boss' through out his professional career had been female. Although his female boss did have a slightly different experience. She agreed that the glass ceiling has raised over the past couple decades, but definitely still exists at the upper echelons. In Fortune 500 companies, only 3% of CEOs are women, but at

least it is possible today; whereas 20 years ago, female CEOs were virtually unheard of.

The most interesting piece of advice that he gave us, was to not be afraid to push back on your boss. Sometimes you are closer to the project and know a little bit better what is realistic and can make appropriate suggestions, and when done tactfully, will earn you respect in the company.

*by Jana DuMond*

**LIGHT UP NIGHT!**

Pittsburgh's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Light up Night was held on November 19 this year, and Pitt SWE was there to celebrate the beginning of the Holiday season. The girls spent their night looking at the exhibits that were on display downtown.

One display was titled "Spirits of Giving From Around the World". This display contains life-sized Santas. Each is dressed in traditional attire from a different country and represents how each country celebrates the season. This exhibit will be downtown



at the PPG Wintergarden until January 7, so those who missed Light Up Night can still enjoy it.

A gingerbread house competition display with over 470 gingerbread constructions was at Light Up Night as well. The houses were created by area residents and prizes were awarded in several categories.

A hallmark of Pittsburgh's Light Up Night is the unveiling of Macy's holiday window display. This year the window display is entitled "Yes Virginia," and consist of three



dimensional creations made from paper.

The night ended with a fireworks display done by Zambelli Internationale Fireworks.

*by Marcy Fischer*