

## Young Professionals Committee Holds Summit

Following positive feedback from the 2005 Washington, DC WEFMAX, hosted by the Federal Water Quality Association, the Water Environment Federation Students and Young Professionals Committee held another Summit to draw competent young workers from across the country. At the April 27 WEFMAX in Charleston, SC, committee members had access to WEF's leaders and were able to focus on the chosen theme of leadership. The goal of the Summit was to promote the sharing of ideas, increase leadership, and raise awareness of the work of the Students and Young Professionals Committee.



This year's event was sponsored by WEF, AWWA, Georgia Association of Water Professionals, WEA of South Carolina, and North Carolina AWWA/WEA. Fifty-four young professionals from twenty different Member Associations attended the event, making it a huge success. The Summit provided a forum for young professionals to learn from leaders in the industry and work together to develop and promote a better understanding of the needs of young professionals in our field.

"How to Move up the Corporate Ladder" was presented by Don Hamburger, Chief Operating Officer, B. P. Barber and Associates Inc., Columbia, SC, and Tyler Richards, Director of Water Reclamation for Gwinnett County, GA. Mr. Hamburger spoke about the importance of personal accountability throughout an individual's career. He outlined the four components of personal accountability:

- Maintaining a positive attitude;
- Understanding personal goals and values;
- Living with integrity;
- Asking the right questions, particularly "What else can I do?"

Ms. Richards gave many tips on how to lead, as well as resources that would inspire us. She stated that in order to lead others, you must have a *vision* and understand the things that need to change. Once you have a clear vision, you must *plan* on how to implement the vision. Finally, you must have the *ability* to implement the plan and communicate it to others.

The next topic was leadership qualities, which included "Achieving Results through Others: Delegation Strategies" by Bill Zieburtz, Director of Financial Services with Jordan, Jones, & Goulding, Norcross, GA, and "Qualities of a Leader" by WEF's Vice President Adam Zabinski, First Deputy Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities in New York. Mr. Zieburtz spoke on the importance of being able to delegate certain tasks and how to know when it was appropriate. We also learned from him that it is okay to delegate up the ladder! Mr. Zabinski encouraged us to get involved and spoke on the importance of water and wastewater professionals.

WEF President Michael Read and former AWWA President Katie McCain provided inspirational messages. Mr. Read spoke of the many challenges of providing clean water around the world and the opportunities in the near future for the preservation of freshwater supplies in the United States. Ms. McCain discussed her rise through the AWWA leadership and the importance of perseverance and hard work in achieving goals.

The afternoon portion included several breakout brainstorming sessions designed to elicit ideas from YPs on possible social and educational events, as well as ideas for events geared toward students. YPs were also asked for input on what they want to gain from their membership in WEF/AWWA, as well as their thoughts on shared opportunities for WEF/AWWA.

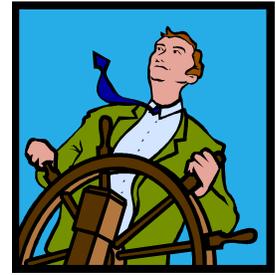
The Summit ended with a social and networking event for the YPs and the YP alumni attending WEFMAX. Becky Dennis, WEASC Past President, visited with many YPs at the reception and sent a thank you to each YP:

*As I enter my 29<sup>th</sup> year in this profession, it thrills me to see such fine young people taking an interest in the environmental field. Many of you are well on your way to wonderful, challenging careers as engineers, operators, R&D, and management teams. You bring with you new technology ideas plus a refreshing wave of enthusiasm that is contagious. Thank you for being such a vital part of our organizations and for presenting new ideas that enable us to be stronger, individually and collectively.*

With the continued transfer of knowledge and the willingness of current leaders to share their experiences with young professionals, the water and wastewater industry will be stronger. This year's event was very successful and would not have been possible without our dedicated volunteers—Dianne Crilley, Paul Olson, Leslie Samel, Erica Huggins, Shad Stringfellow, Judy Jones, Bob Wimmer, and Madi Garza-Bird. Based on the success of the first two, another YP Summit is planned for 2007. If you are interested in being part of planning the event and/or holding the event in your area, please contact either Dianne Crilley at [dcrilley@wef.org](mailto:dcrilley@wef.org) or Leslie Samel at [samells@cdm.com](mailto:samells@cdm.com).

*—Leslie Samel is a Project Manager for CDM in Charlotte, NC. She is also a WEF Director-at-Large and incoming Chair of WEF's Students and Young Professionals Committee.*

A few guiding principles to help you navigate the rough waters of leadership . . .



When you are in a position of leadership, it helps to have a few guiding principles to assist you in navigating the difficulties you will inevitably have to endure. Here are a few thoughts to meditate on:

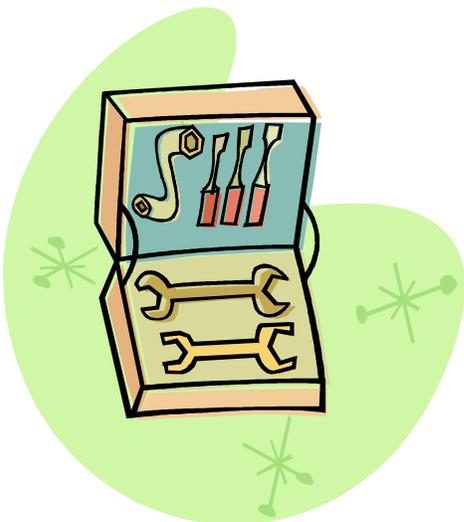
- Think about your ordinary interactions with your peers, colleagues and staff members. When you are in a meeting, at the water cooler, or in the lunchroom, it is wise to remember that each interaction is an opportunity for you to take a risk in the realm of openness. When you do, you open yourself up to growth and happiness.
- To understand your work world, you must simultaneously examine the work environment and examine yourself for biases and influences you are not aware of. Otherwise, it will be difficult to render the good judgment that will be required of you.
- One of the most powerful ideas to remember in the workplace or in life is that no problem will be solved unless someone takes responsibility for solving it.

[Adapted from *Meditations from the Road*, by M. Scott Peck]

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.

—Theodore Roosevelt

# Career Skills Tool Kit: Attitude



One of the most important skills to add to your career tool kit is *positive attitude*. Attitude is a reflection of who you are and what you are thinking or feeling. As you come in contact with co-workers, supervisors, or customers, your attitude reflects on them. Your skill at managing your attitude in a positive way will allow you to control difficult situations and decrease stress in your job and your personal life.

Your attitude has the power to enhance *or* derail your career. Adopt a positive, can-do attitude. Supervisors want energetic, positive employees who are willing to learn, roll up their sleeves, and take the initiative to get the job done. Nobody likes being around a person who constantly whines, complains, or just looks for problems. The same is true for the workplace. No one wants issues or concerns

## The Power of Attitude

“Our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but how we react to what happens; not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events, and outcomes. It is a catalyst . . . a spark that creates extraordinary results.”

—Anonymous

buried, but by constructively voicing your concerns, you can raise an issue for consideration.

Have you ever heard about doing an “attitude check”? There are a few ways to do one. One is to ask a friend or supervisor to give you frank feedback. This is very hard to do because it is difficult to hear something that might be critical. Direct feedback, however, can give you the best information on how others perceive you.

Another is to audit your conversation or have a co-worker help you. Are you using negative words or phrases? Sometimes we aren’t even aware of how we sound to others. By listening to how things are said and then changing our vocabulary to a more positive tone, we can improve our effectiveness at work and with co-workers. Example:

### Words to Use

cooperative  
collaborate  
guide  
helpful  
productive  
effective  
team  
thanks  
solve  
expedite  
value  
improve  
feasible  
reduce

### Words to Avoid

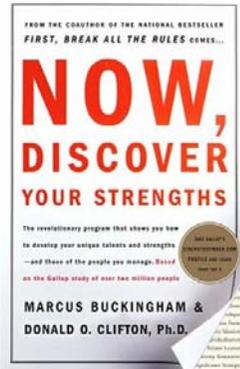
blame  
stupid  
cannot  
fail  
fault  
demand  
hopeless  
impossible  
impractical  
loser  
wasted  
unfair  
overloaded  
frustrating

The next time you are upset over an issue at work, try using positive words and recommending solutions to the problem. Your ideas might not be accepted the first time you offer them, but continue to make positive suggestions. Your positive attitude when approaching your boss with alternate ideas is much more effective than griping to co-workers or allowing your anger to spill over in your conversations with your supervisor.

Book Review, by Alicia Wilson (awilson@sws-sssd.org)

## ***Now, Discover Your Strengths***

by Marcus Buckingham & Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D.



Several talented and inspiring leaders spoke to a group of Young Professionals about how they achieved success in their careers during the Young Professionals Summit at WEFMAX in Charleston, SC. Tyler Richards, a WEF Board of Trustees member, made a point of

recommending to audience members that they identify their strengths and weaknesses, then find a role in their organization (or create one) that accentuates their strengths and deemphasizes their weaknesses. Katie McCain, AWWA Immediate Past President, mentioned *Now, Discover Your Strengths* as a way for people to identify their strengths and learn to focus on perfecting them.

“What a great idea” I thought. “I need this book.” I’m one of those types who are very good at identifying their own weaknesses and obsessing on them, so the thought of using this wasted energy on identifying and perfecting my strengths was liberating. Directly after the workshop I rushed to the bookstore across the street from the hotel to purchase a copy of the book. I found plenty of books on Charleston cuisine, dialects, and self-guided tours, but no books on identifying strengths. Maybe that was a hint that I should be sightseeing instead. Eventually I found a copy and read it within a month of purchasing it. This is important, as this is the first non-audio book I have read in its entirety since bearing my 2-year-old (okay, not counting the trashy novel I read during vacation at the beach). I *made* time to read this book because I knew I needed to understand its content in order to understand my role in the field I have chosen.

The book is a sequel to a national bestseller called *First, Break All the Rules*. Both authors of *Now, Discover Your Strengths* are employees of The Gallup Organization, and the content is based on a Gallup study of over two million people. The book

explains that most people become experts at their own weaknesses and spend most of their lives trying to fix these flaws. In fact, humans seem to have a fixation with fault and failing. The book states in its opening that “doctors have studied disease in order to learn about health. Psychologists have investigated sadness in order to learn about joy. Therapists have looked into the causes of divorce in order to learn about happy marriage. And in schools and workplaces around the world, each one of us has been encouraged to identify, analyze, and correct our weaknesses in order to become strong.” Another common tendency of employers is to focus on creating “well-rounded” employees. This book questions these practices and suggests instead that employers (and employees) would be better served by examining the strengths and natural talents of each individual, improving and refining these strengths, and capitalizing on the differences.

The authors start out by explaining their definitions of strength and talent. They make the case that individuals should know their weaknesses and work around them, but primarily focus on identifying and refining their strengths. The reader is instructed to complete a 30-minute “Strengths Finder Profile,” which is found on the authors’ website. The profile consists of many sets of paired phrases, and the user must indicate a tendency toward one or neither of the phrases. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, just phrases that predict the presence or absence of a particular talent. The user is allowed only 20 seconds to make a selection in order to assess spontaneous reactions and natural talents.

Many people have completed assessments in the past to learn their personality type or to identify a career field to match their character. You don’t have to fear that after completing a bachelor’s and master’s degree in chemical engineering, the profile will reveal that all along you should have been a trial lawyer. This assessment doesn’t attempt to package each individual into one of five or ten

“types,” but instead recognizes that each person is unique. The profile includes 34 themes of talent and provides users with their top five matches. The book emphasizes that you do not have to change your chosen field, but if your weaknesses are inhibiting you, perhaps you can identify a role within the field you have chosen that better suits you. And what about your weaknesses—should you just forget about them? No, but you shouldn’t obsess about them either. You should learn to work around them, and the book lists some helpful tips on how to do this. There are also many tips on how to perfect your strengths and to recognize that all of your strengths are woven together to form your talent, not just individual characteristics. Perfecting one’s strengths is a lifelong task!

This book can also be used to profile the strengths of your employees in order to learn to individualize management techniques. Managing a team as one personality type will often result in mediocrity, but using a management style that is customized to individuals will motivate them. The book lists all of the themes with tips on how to recognize them and how to manage them.

I can be my own worst critic, so after spending some time identifying my strengths, weaknesses, goals, priorities, etc., I began to feel pretty self-centered. But this soul-searching is a benefit to my organization, too. I can determine my strengths and use them to achieve the company’s goals as well as my own, making me one fulfilled and happy employee.

More men fail through lack of purpose than lack of talent.  
—Billy Sunday



## Calling All Young Professionals!

- Are you a YP or are you interested in YPs?
- Do you want to hear about YP activities in other Member Associations (MAs)?
- Do you want to share what your YP committee is doing?
- Are you interested in starting YP dialogue on a national level?

The WEF Student and Young Professionals (S&YP) Committee has developed a quarterly e-newsletter to promote these very ideas. We are looking for people interested in contributing and sharing experiences, such as:

- Recent activities in your MA
- Tips for getting YPs involved
- YPs from your MA whose efforts should be highlighted
- Career development ideas for YPs
- Other topics to share with YPs nationwide!!

If you are interested in being a part of this new communication tool, please contact Erica Huggins at [ehuggins@BPBarber.com](mailto:ehuggins@BPBarber.com) or Sarah Hubbell at [sarah.hubbell@entexinc.com](mailto:sarah.hubbell@entexinc.com). We would like to hear your comments and suggestions on topics for future issues. We also welcome any MA updates from current YP Chairs.

If you would like to be added or removed from the current distribution list for this e-newsletter, please contact Dianne Crilley at [DCrilley@wef.org](mailto:DCrilley@wef.org).

## Employment Opportunities

### WEFTEC.06 in Dallas

Candidates looking for a career in water quality should plan to attend the Students and Young Professionals Networking & Career Fair on Monday, October 23. Nationally known companies participate in the fair each year looking to hire quality candidates. Candidates, submit your resume by September 15 to [WEFTECstudent@wef.org](mailto:WEFTECstudent@wef.org). Companies interested in participating, contact [Dcrilley@wef.org](mailto:Dcrilley@wef.org).

# Young Professionals Committee Updates from WEF Member Associations

## Water Environment Association of Texas Provided by Heather Harris (hharris@ch2m.com)

The Young Professionals Committee of WEAT has been very active for several years. They have written an extensive mission statement with the goal of attracting more YPs to join and become active in the MA. Because Texas is such a large and diverse state, they have individual section representatives on the YP committee who organize and plan various local activities. Each section rep is provided with a presentation to give at their local gatherings demonstrating the benefits of active membership. The committee has also published two brochures, one that presents the benefits of joining WEAT as a young professional, and one that presents the benefits of encouraging young professionals to become involved with WEAT (intended for managers).

At the WEAT annual conference, three Young Professional activities are held each year.

1. The annual meet-and-greet, where all young professionals in attendance are invited to come, meet other young professionals around the state, and meet WEAT and WEF national leadership. At Texas Water 2006, about 50 people attended this event.
2. The annual Young Professional committee meeting, which all young professionals are encouraged to attend and are asked to bring any and all ideas to help guide the next year for the YP committee.
3. The YP technical session. This technical session provides YP-g geared topics such as ethics, obtaining a PE license, and project management. This year approximately 40 people attended this session.

Additionally, at the annual conference in Austin this year a scavenger hunt was held for YPs. Two teams were sent out to the streets of Austin with their team balloons to take photos of specific landmarks and graffiti. The first team to arrive at Joe's Crab Shack with the most items won. The prizes and after-party were provided by two manufacturer's rep firms, Environmental Improvements Inc. and Newman Regency Group.



## **Ohio Water Environment Association Provided by Dan Martin (dmartin@raconsultantsllc.com)**

The Young Professionals committee has been trying to jump-start YP interest in the Ohio Water Environment Association (OWEA). The Committee is currently preparing for the upcoming state conference. They are planning mock interview sessions for college students who want to prepare for future job interviews and for post-collegiate YPs who want to become Board Certified Environmental Engineers through the American Academy of Environmental Engineers.

Every year the OWEA holds a student paper competition at the state conference. The YP Committee organizes this competition. Interest in the competition from the universities was low this year, but they hope renewed contacts with professors will increase awareness of the competition.

Last year at the state conference the committee held a putting contest in the exhibit hall in conjunction with a YP booth. They had a 50/50 raffle to generate money for Water for People. They held the drawing during the student paper competition as a way to attract folks to the presentations.

This year they will be leading a roundtable discussion on YP issues at an upcoming section meeting. They are planning a core discussion group of four or five professionals to discuss various topics, and then they will open up the discussion to the floor.

Ohio's Southwest Section held a paddlewheel boat cruise on the Ohio River on May 6, 2006. It was an interesting, up-close, and interactive way to experience the issues impacting the Ohio River, including the history of water quality in the river, a watershed approach to water quality, water quality monitoring methods, and a discussion of key pollutants. The riverboat is actually a floating education center for grade school and high school students and is funded through the ORSANCO Education Foundation (OEF). ORSANCO (the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission) was established on June 30, 1948, to control and abate pollution in the Ohio River Basin.

During the two-hour cruise, experts from OEF and ORSANCO discussed the issues mentioned above and described the mission and tools utilized in teaching students. In addition to gazing at the beautiful Greater Cincinnati shores, participants observed drinking water treatment intakes.



**OWEA Young Professionals on an Ohio River Cruise**

## Arizona Water and Pollution Control Association Provided by Jason Marie (jmarie@carollo.com)

For the fourth year in a row, the AWPCA YP Committee hosted several events at AWPCA's Annual Conference. The events included a Student Scholarship Awards Program, a Conference BBQ Fundraiser, and a Young Professionals Panel.

For the Student Scholarship Awards Program, area students submitted essays that described an Arizona-related water issue and how their personal histories and planned futures related to that issue. The seven recipients received scholarships of \$1,000 or \$500. The recipients were recognized during the Conference Luncheon Program on May 3.

The attendees at this year's conference BBQ had an opportunity to enjoy dinner, drinks, and music, as well as entertainment provided by the YP Committee. The YP Committee would like to thank all of the attendees that stopped by to compete in the YP Committee's Water Trivia and "Hang Your Balls Here" Contests.

The YP Committee would also like to thank all of the presenters and attendees who participated in this year's YP Panel at the Annual Conference. Each session was well attended by YPs and SPs (seasoned professionals).

Topic	Presenter	Company
Starting Your Own Business	Sara Gerke Lieski	Wass Gerke Associates
Time Management	Lani Good	Coe & Van Loo Consultants, Inc.
Making the Transition from Technical Staff to Management and Leadership Versus Management	Trevor Lindley	Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.
Discover Your True Colors: A Guide to Enhanced Communication Style	Jack Dermody	City of Phoenix

The AWPCA YP Committee also hosted a three-part technical luncheon series on distribution systems. The series was presented by Maureen Hymel of the City of Phoenix Water Department.

Part One: A Brief History of the City of Phoenix Water System

Part Two: How a Water Distribution System Should Work . . . But May Not

Part Three: Water, the Next Frontier! (A look at engineering challenges for future generations)



**2006 AWPCA Scholarship Recipients**



YP Technical Luncheon Series



AWPCA Annual Conference BBQ

## NYWEA Provided by Vincent Apa (ApaVL@CDM.com)

A YP social event was held at the NYWEA Annual Conference in the President's Suite. The event was well attended by board members and other NYWEA members, YPs, and students.

The Western Chapter held a Social Event for Young Professionals and the Western Chapter Board at Dave & Busters which included dinner and a game card for a reduced rate. They also held a session at the Greater Buffalo Environmental Conference that included a seminar on obtaining a professional engineering license and free admission to the social hour afterwards.

The Capital Chapter held a technical session in January on membrane bioreactors. In early May, a joint event was held with YPs and RPI students at the Town of Guilderland water treatment plant, where a tour of the facility was given, including a new treatment system for disinfection byproducts control. The event was prompted by the students, who had been to a wastewater treatment plant, but never to a water treatment plant.

In January, the Lower Hudson Chapter held its annual dinner meeting, preceded by a Young Professional Get-Together Happy Hour. Drinks were paid for by the chapter, and we offered a half-price fee for any YP who attended the dinner meeting.



One worthwhile task carried to a successful conclusion is worth half-a-hundred half-finished tasks.—  
Malcolm S. Forbes

## Water Environment Association of South Carolina (WEASC) Provided by Rob Kelley (rob@premier-water.com)

The Young Professionals of South Carolina have been active for several years. We have been a joint committee of the WEASC and the SC American Water Works Association (SCAWWA). We have a very active and vibrant committee, and we host several activities throughout the year.

At the State Environmental Conference, a joint WEASC and SCAWWA event, we host a YP reception that is sponsored by Hughes Engineered Products, a local manufacturer's rep firm. It has been a fantastic networking opportunity for SC YPs to meet and greet local and national WEF and AWWA leadership. The reception is preceded by technical sessions geared toward presentations selected by the YP committee. This past year there was a presentation by the FBI on internet fraud.

At the state conference, both the SCAWWA and WEASC YPs sponsor a poster event that sends the winners to the respective national shows. We have not had the level of interest we had hoped for; we need more posters from qualified students. Fortunately the two responses we had were both highly qualified, and they each won a trip— one to Dallas for WEFTEC and one to San Antonio for ACE.

There is also an education workshop that was attended by 35 members. This year the presentations were geared toward safety and HazMat response due to a recent accident in Graniteville, SC. The event was sponsored by Siemens Water Technologies – RJ Environmental, represented by Heyward Inc., and Severn Trent – Clortec, represented by Premier Water.



A WEFMAX event was held in Charleston, SC, where many YPs from other areas of the country met. The SC YP committee was well represented at the event. There was a social mixer for the YPs and WEF leadership. During the idea jam, there were several excellent ideas on how to get YPs and students more involved in the Association.



## WEF SYPC Committee Update Provided by Sarah Hubbell (sarah.hubbell@entexinc.com)

The SYPC (Students and Young Professionals Committee) continues to be extremely active, planning events for WEFTEC and other initiatives to encourage people to get involved with WEF. At last year's WEFTEC in Washington D.C., we hosted the following events:

- Student design competition
- Career fair
- Student chapter meeting
- YP technical program session
- Student paper competition
- Technology-based tours of the exhibit floor
- Student and YP lounge with free lunch
- YP reception at the District Chophouse

The YP reception was sponsored by manufacturers who provided the food and drinks and many door prizes. It was a packed house on Halloween night and everyone had a blast.



This year the Committee plans to hold all of the same activities at WEFTEC in Dallas in October, as well as adding a preconference workshop on hydraulics geared specifically to YPs. We are currently raising sponsorship money for all these activities and working out the details. The annual YP reception will be held on Monday night, October 23, at Gator's Croc and Roc in the trendy West End, just a few blocks from the convention center. The party starts at 7:30, and we will have the rooftop patio to ourselves.

In addition to planning WEFTEC events, the SYPC has several other initiatives we have been working on this year. For the first time this year the WEF membership forms contain a checkbox allowing members to designate their age and an interest in YP issues if they choose. This is a huge step forward towards setting up a database of YPs for marketing efforts such as direct mailings. To get this accomplished we had liaisons between the SYPC and the WEF Membership Committee, who worked hard to plead our case. We also created a program offering new YPs almost 50% off of their WEF membership dues for the first year.

For the past year the SYPC has contributed a bi-monthly column dedicated to Young Professional issues in the WE&T magazine. It has been well received and runs on the last page of each issue it appears in. We have also contributed some news pieces to the WEF Highlights newsletters, but we are most excited about reaching a new level of communication with this e-newsletter, YP Connections. The Committee has made efforts to communicate with other WEF committees and WEF leadership through committee liaisons and presentations at WEFMAX regional leadership meetings. This year members of the SYPC helped plan and organize the YP Summit held in conjunction with one WEFMAX meeting in Charleston, SC. The YP Summit was considered a huge success and we hope to continue it annually.

*If you would like to get involved with WEF's Students and Young Professionals Committee, please contact Dianne Crilley at [DCrilley@wef.org](mailto:DCrilley@wef.org).*