

Society of Women Environmental Professionals  
Greater Philadelphia Chapter

# Newsletter

December 2020



## NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

As 2020 draws to a close, I feel confident in saying it is a year we will never forget. In what seemed like an instant, the world as we knew it changed. The immediate need to switch to a virtual world, both professionally and personally, was initially foreign, but as the months have gone by, now seems commonplace. WFH, social distancing, Zooming, flatten the curve, virtual happy hour, super-spreader, pandemic are all phrases that have infected our vocabulary. We're in the "new normal".

As a professional organization we had to pivot. Planned events such as monthly networking lunches, the 2nd Annual RCRA Seminar, and the annual Touchstone Awards were not going forward as planned. But we are a resilient group! Our committees quickly switched gears, and we successfully held Virtual Book Club, a seven-part RCRA online seminar series, and a Virtual Walk Down Memory Lane in honor of past Touchstone awardees. We have been able to provide our membership with technical and social events in a safe environment.

We would like to thank everyone for their support this year. We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season. We look forward to the new year with the hope that we'll begin to emerge from current restrictions and see our friends and colleagues in person once again. Until then, be safe, healthy, and happy!

Kristin

~ Kristin Weiler – SWEPP GP Executive Board Co-Chair

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## A LETTER TO THE WORKING MOMS - You've Always Been a Hero

Dear Mom,

You've always been a hero, it's just now that we are home more, we get to see you in action every day....as your daughter, I cannot believe how much you do for our family, for your job, and for those outside of our home....

During this extremely unusual year of 2020 which has carried so many different stressors, one group of people has no doubt experienced more than others- working moms. First, I fully admit that I cannot possibly understand or comprehend what you are going through, because I am not a mother. I can, however, reflect upon my childhood when I spent numerous hours watching my mom study and type papers while going through nursing school to receive her R.N. license during my elementary school years. That memory and interaction with her has made me more appreciative and aware of the sacrifices that so many of you are making these days...and I just wanted to say Thank You!

Somehow during RN school at night, working her daytime nursing job at the hospital (and sometimes nights), and taking care of my dad, younger sister and me, my mom somehow managed to not only receive her RN license but also graduated as Valedictorian of her class....as a 30-something mom with a family. Juggling me asking her math questions, my sister needing a ride to her gymnastics class, my dad often working shift-hours, term papers and laboratory exercises, my mom became an inspiration to me that I would not fully recognize until years later as an adult. I have tried (probably not hard enough) to express my gratitude to her and explain how she still continues to inspire me today...as she is on the front lines of COVID working in elder care. Courage is sometimes right in front of you and not always immediately recognized.

To the moms trying to keep their day to day activities in-check between breakfast dishes, Zoom

calls with the teacher, help with calculus equations, making sure the piano is still being practiced, getting their quarterly business reports completed or saving lives on the front lines and so many, many other jobs, from this former child to you- you deserve thanks, you are appreciated and deserve to be recognized for your never-ending hard work and dedication to your families. You are appreciated and we simply cannot say Thank You enough!

Please share your favorite memory or honor your mom or peer on our [LinkedIn page](#) or email your story for our next newsletter! Pictures welcome.

"If you ever feel like giving up, just remember there is a little girl watching who wants to be just like you." – Unknown

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## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

One of the Society of Women Environmental Professionals of Greater Philadelphia's (SWEP GP's) 2020 goals was to increase focus on generational, cultural, racial, gender, orientation, and abilities diversity and to ensure all members feel included. To pursue this goal, we established a Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) committee. Committee members attended virtual webinars on race, diversity, and inclusion. We also created and implemented a framework to ensure each of SWEP GP's committees continues to enhance the organizational culture and climate in which every voice is valued. While this work hasn't been at the forefront of SWEP's focus for very long, our committees have embraced this and are working to incorporate D&I goals in their agendas. Currently SWEP GP is connecting with potential partner organizations to discuss teaming opportunities on programming. We continue to learn about subjects such as systemic racism, inherent biases, and how to fight them. It's a slow, deliberate process but it will improve SWEP GP

for the benefit of all current and future members. We welcome your thoughts and ideas on D&I and look forward to being able to share with you our advances in 2021!

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## MEMBERSHIP

It's time to renew your SWEPP GP membership for the 2021 calendar year, or it's a great time to become a new SWEPP GP member, in order to participate in member-only and member-discounted programming for the upcoming year.

SWEPP GP memberships allow for the opportunity to network with industry peers and participate in educational, professional, social, and community outreach events. Additional SWEPP GP membership benefits include online access to our membership directory, ability to post job opportunities on SWEPP GP's website, and free or discounted registration rates for SWEPP GP events.

SWEPP GP memberships are for the calendar year and several memberships types are available: Individual membership, reduced rate student/academia/government personnel membership, and corporate memberships that allow all registered employees the benefits of a SWEPP GP Membership. In addition, we have joint membership opportunities with NJ SWEPP, that allow members to participate with both organizations. More information can be found on our [SWEPP GP Membership](#) page.

SWEPP GP membership dues are an essential piece of our annual budget and allow our organization to continue with SWEPP GP's overall mission. They cover our annual operating expenses and partially fund our membership events and scholarship and grants and community outreach programs.

We thank you for your membership for 2021 and continued support of SWEPP GP.

If you have any membership questions or want to learn more about SWEPP membership, please contact our membership chair, Amy Corr at [amy.corr@pacelabs.com](mailto:amy.corr@pacelabs.com) or 215-341-1141.

*~ Amy Corr - SWEPP GP Membership Committee Chair*

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# TOUCHSTONE AWARDS 2020 WILL BE A VIRTUAL WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE...

In early spring, the Touchstone committee co-chairs Erin Rodgers (*SWEP GP BOD Member and Principal Chemist at Environmental Standards*) and Beth Brandt (*SWEP GP Co-Chair and Sales Manager at Suburban Testing Labs*) had begun planning for the 2020 Touchstone Awards Gala. Both were hopeful that a November event could still be a reality by the fall. Sadly though, the decision to host an in-person networking event where nearly 200 people gather to celebrate an honoree, was not realistic for this year.

So as not to lose our tradition of a yearly honoree, SWEP GP has been proceeding with planning our 2020 Touchstones as a Virtual event. Our committee has already been in contact with the past 10 Touchstone Award recipients to ask that they participate in a virtual walk down memory lane with us and allow us to catch up with what they've been busy with since they were honored. Our Scholarship & Grants Committee, chaired by Jennifer Waters (*SWEP GP BOD Member and Professional Engineer at Urban Engineers, Inc.*) have finished their 2020 selections as well, and were given an increased budget this year to allow for more awards. This combined Virtual Ceremony will be hosted as a series of e-blasts, video clips and a full video compilation that will be rolled out in February 2021. SWEP GP has hired a student-videographer/editor to pull these items together into a cohesive and well-formatted presentation. The video compilation will also be highlighted at our next in-person event, hopefully in November 2021.

Thank you to the many hands that were raised and volunteered to assist. We will be sure to continue involving you in the future planning for Touchstones 2021. And we also welcome you to continue to be active SWEP GP members with our other committees and planned events.

~ Beth Brandt - SWEP GP Executive Board Co-Chair and Touchstone Committee Co-Chair

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## SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT

SWEP GP has selected the scholarship winners for 2020:

### **Scholarship Winner: Ellen Heiman, University of Pennsylvania**

Ellen Heiman was awarded a SWEP GP 2020 Graduate Scholarship for \$3,000. Ellen is a Juris Doctor candidate at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Prior to attending the University of Pennsylvania, Ellen received her B.S. in Child Development from Vanderbilt University. She is the Director of Events of her Environmental Law Project, Education and Advocacy

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Chair of the If/When/How: Reproductive Justice, the Co-Chair of the Beyond A Reasonable Stout, and a member of the Student Discipline Advocacy Services, Post-Acceptance Committee, Student Orientation Committee and the National Lawyers' Guild. Her ability to entwine her passions for environmental justice and sustainable practices further drives Ellen as an impressive environmentalist and law student.



### **Scholarship Winner: Emma Krampe, Polytechnic University of Milan**

Emma Krampe was awarded a SWEP GP 2020 Graduate Scholarship for \$3,000. Emma is a master's degree candidate in Environmental Engineering and Land Management at the Polytechnic University of Milan. Prior to attending Polytechnic University, Emma received her B.S. in Civil Engineering with an Environmental Concentration from Temple University. Emma continues to serve as an intern with the Philadelphia Water Department to draft water and sewer mains to update Philadelphia's infrastructure. Emma is also currently conducting her water modeling senior design project using EPA WASP water quality software for the Wissahickon Watershed. She is the standing Editor-in-Chief of the Freely Magazine and is the President as well as an International Project Lead for Engineers Without Borders. Emma's ability to continue expanding her diverse project portfolio whilst also maintaining academic distinctions such as a Temple University's Presidential Scholar and a 2019 Diamond Award winner solidifies Emma as an essential environmental spokeswoman and engineer.

**SWEP GP congratulates the 2020 scholarship winners!**

*~ Jennifer Waters- SWEP GP Scholarship & Grants Committee Chair*

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## **GRANT WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT**

SWEP GP has selected the grant winners for 2020:

### **Watershed Institute**

The Watershed Institute, in support of their Watershed Academy, was awarded \$2,500. Their goal is to provide a week-long educational and engaging program for six female students in grades 9-12. The Watershed Academy program will focus on six academy sessions including Environmental Advocacy, Environmental Field Science, Clean Water, Green Architecture, Stream Science, Clean Water, and Climate Change. The program will be focused at the 950-acre Watershed Reserve and Research Center. Using the Center, the women will explore environmental careers alongside professors and professionals through hands-on activities while they engage in scientific techniques and conservation projects.

### **Odyssey Charter School**

Odyssey Charter School, in support of their after-school program 'Girls Grow Greens' (GGG), was awarded \$1,748. This program focuses on providing K-12 students with hands-on and real-world opportunities to be environmental stewards of the planet and also provides donations to local food closets in local Delaware neighborhoods. Students will utilize innovative vertical farm technology to design a three-layer Radix Kit by choosing growth media and vegetable and herb seeds; monitoring plant growth and compost development; controlling pests; and harvesting fresh vegetables and herbs. GGG's objective is to explore how urban agriculture can be a viable solution for feeding an increasing global population whilst providing opportunities for female students to learn about careers in sustainability, develop life skills, help their families make healthier food choices, and make positive changes in their community.

### **John J. Tyler Arboretum**

John J. Tyler Arboretum, in support of their Women in Horticulture and Penn State Brandywine partnership, was awarded \$250 to fund their 'Tyler's Seeds of Knowledge Competition'. This competition showcases projects completed by women from kindergarten to college in 2-minute video presentations. Video categories include: Home Gardening or Soil Conservation; Water or Energy Conservation; and/or, Recycling. Winners are awarded with scholarships to continue their project research highlighted in each video. This competition is designed to inspire women and girls to pursue green-collar careers by providing a platform to showcase their innovations and connect them to industry leaders.

### **SWEP GP congratulates the 2020 grant winners!**

~ Jennifer Waters- SWEP GP Scholarship & Grants Committee *Chair*

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## **2020 SOCIAL PROGRAMS WRAP UP AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021**

I think we can all breathe a sigh of relief that we have made it to December! 2020 has been a challenging year for all of us but with 2021 on the horizon, I am ready to look ahead at what the new year will bring, but first a quick look back at this year.

In January and February, SWEP GP held a members-only networking breakfast, a joint holiday happy hour with BCONE and AIPG and a joint networking lunch with PAEP. Then in March, the SWEP GP Social Programs Committee transitioned to the virtual world. We started a Book Club with topics focused on women, STEM, or personal development. We plan to continue the Book

Club in January. We will be reading *Group: How One Therapist and a Circle of Strangers Saved My Life* by Christie Tate and will discuss this book during a virtual lunch hour meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

We remain hopeful that we will be able to gather in person next year, but we are planning for engaging virtual and in-person events. We are in the early stages of planning for a virtual trivia night and looking to restart our networking lunches. Additionally, we believe that outdoor, distanced events will be the safest in the short-term and are looking to host a golf outing, axe throwing, or other fun outdoor networking event. We had originally planned to host an orienteering event in the fall of 2020; this event will be rescheduled for 2021. Please stay tuned for further information on these events!

And lastly, if you have ideas for future social programs or virtual events that would you like to see added to our agenda, please reach out to Erin Rodgers ([erodgers@envstd.com](mailto:erodgers@envstd.com)). And as always, if you are interested in volunteering or would like to help to plan an event, we would love to have you!

*~ Erin Rodgers- SWEP GP Social Programs Committee Chair*

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## SECOND ANNUAL RCRA SEMINAR EVENT RECAP

Throughout the month of October, SWEP GP hosted the Second Annual (Virtual) RCRA Seminar. This event covered diverse topics of import in the world of RCRA. Our event consisted of seven 60-minute sessions and had over 40 people register.

The complete Seminar included seven presentations, from experts across the industry, covering the following topics.

- What is a Hazardous Waste? by Charles Neslund with Eurofins
- Analytical Methods for Disposal by Kristin Weiler with Alpha Labs
- Managing Aerosol Cans as Universal Waste under the new US EPA Final Rule by Shaun Gilday with Environmental Standards
- Hazardous Waste Generator Requirements; EPA's Hazardous Waste Generator Improvement Rule by Austin Manning and Rodd Bender with Manko, Gold, Katcher,



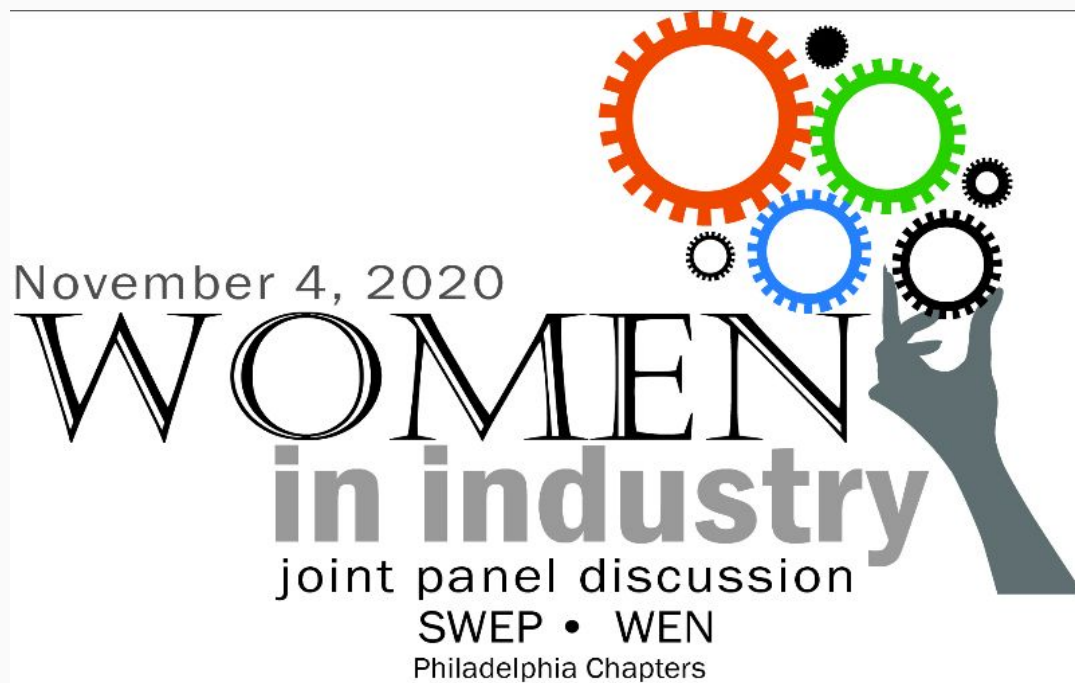
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- Air Emissions and RCRA - An Overview of Subparts BB and CC by Mark Robinson with All4
- PCB Soil Remediation - Off-site Disposal and Cost Management by Bill Daddono with Heritage Environmental
- Auditing the Disposal Facility by Marianne Payne with GZA

While everyone would have preferred an in-person event, based on a review of participant comments received and a post-event survey, our switch to a virtual format for the Annual RCRA Seminar was successful. SWEP GP is already planning to host the Third Annual RCRA Seminar in 2021 and looks forward to seeing you there. If you have any suggestions for the topics or are interested in presenting at the next Seminar, please reach out to the [Technical Programs Committee](#).

SWEP GP would like to extend our thanks to our presenters, moderators, and our audience for attending!

*~ Ammie Martin, Committee Co-Chair*



## **WOMEN IN INDUSTRY: A CONVERSATION EVENT RECAP**

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, SWEP GP and Women's Energy Network (WEN)- Philadelphia Chapter hosted a joint event which gathered women from multiple industries and backgrounds to participate in our panel discussion, *Women in Industry: A Conversation*. Our event lasted 90 minutes and had over 70 people register.

Our panelists fielded a variety of questions ranging from their backgrounds and how they landed in their current carries, challenges faced in leadership positions as a woman and how they were able to overcome those challenges, maintaining a balance between work and family (especially in these challenging times) and advise they would give to young women just beginning their careers or the seasoned veterans looking to make a career move. The audience was able to ask question during the conversation (and there were some really great ones!) and network with each other at the end of the call.

SWEP GP would like to extend our thanks to WEN for joint-hosting and planning the event with us, and a huge THANK YOU to our panelists, Cassie, and our audience for attending!

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## 2020 TECHNICAL PROGRAMS UPDATE

It is safe to say that 2020 was a year of firsts for everyone, including SWEP GP Technical Programs. While 2020 will be remembered for many things, the Technical Programs Committee will remember it as the first time we ventured into the virtual world. While we encountered the expected missteps that come with any new venture, I can honestly say we took the hurdles in stride and were successful in providing informative virtual technical programs.

In January, the SWEP GP Board of Directors developed several initiatives for the upcoming year. Specific to the Technical Programs Committee, we planned to focus on recruiting additional resources and member-volunteers, develop several quality technical programming opportunities, and clearly tie-in the member benefits associated with the programs. Since we are continually seeking additional volunteers, that initiative will always exist; therefore, I will focus on the remaining initiatives first.

In February and March, the Technical Programs Committee was focused on organizing everything for our Second Annual RCRA Seminar in early April. I am sure you remember those days when we all thought that we would all be back together again in a couple weeks, so you will understand the multiple postponements from April to May and again to June for this event.

In the interim, we worked on a SWEP GP first by venturing into the digital world with our Virtual Lunch and Learn on TRI Reporting for PFAS. This enabled us to offer quality programming while maintaining safe distances. The event was a preview for our Second Annual RCRA Seminar.

The success of the Virtual Lunch & Learn led to investigating the possibility of hosting the Second Annual RCRA Seminar virtually. As you know, if you are following our [LinkedIn page](#), this was presented over seven sessions throughout the month of October.

While in the midst of planning and hosting the Second Annual RCRA Seminar, we worked with SWEP GP Event Committee and Women's Energy Network (WEN)- Philadelphia Chapter to co-host Women in Industry: A Conversation. This event was offered free to our members, as a thank you for their membership in this difficult year.

While we are certainly looking forward to getting back together in person for the 2021 Annual RCRA Seminar and the PA DEP Region 3 Annual Update next year, we don't want you to think this will be the end of our virtual programs. Based on the success of the 2020 virtual programs, SWEP GP will continue to offer virtual programs in addition to our in-person events.

And lest you think I forgot; I would like to circle back to first initiative. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to help to plan an event, we would love to have you! We would love to hear your suggestions for upcoming sessions on topics and/or speakers. Please reach out to the [Technical Programs Committee](#) with your topic and speaker ideas, as well as your own interest in volunteering.

*~ Ammie, Martin, Committee Co-Chair*

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## WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020 WRAP UP

This year the Website/Social Media/Public Relations Committee took on several key initiatives to

improve members' experience on the [SWEP GP website](#), [LinkedIn pages](#), and overall improve marketing information on our great organization to members and future members.

One of our key initiatives was to advance the creation of our new logo, develop electronic and hard copy formats of marketing materials for day-to-day operations and communications and develop informational materials that can be distributed with the goal of spreading information on our organization and growing membership. With the help of Sugartown Communications, we were able to complete our main 2020 goal.

Also during 2020, our committee continued to support SWEP GP's events through advertisement, maintenance our website and communications platforms, and supported the 2020 goals of our other committees.

As we begin planning for 2021, we are always looking for feedback or ways that we can better distribute information to our members and those interested in SWEP GP. If you have any suggestions, please email us through [our Committees](#) or message us on [LinkedIn](#).

~ Becky Buchanan, Committee Co-Chair



## IN THE KNOW – DON'T MISS OUT

Did you know our events registration offers an option to add a calendar invite? You can select from different options including Outlook, Apple and Google... Be sure to Save Your Date when you register for our 2021 events!

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