President’s Message

Sofia M. Nirshberg, P.E.  
President  
VN ENGINEERS, INC.

I am very excited to be starting my second year as President of WTS CT Valley Chapter. The key focus this year is membership, including retaining all current members and aggressively recruiting new members. As long as this organization has been active, it has been a challenge to maintain and grow the membership. Remember members are the lifeblood of the organization. Your energy, ideas and diversity are an integral part of the success of WTS. As a healthy and thriving organization, together we have a strong voice with which to advocate the advancement and the professional development of Women in Transportation. This goal cannot be achieved without the help of all our members. This is your organization and the more members we have the stronger we will become so please help promote WTS and let’s maintain our numbers. If you have not renewed your membership for 2005 please do so right away and don’t forget to bring your friends along for the ride.

In addition to making our Chapter stronger another goal I have is to make WTS Connecticut Valley more visible. In two (2) years the Connecticut gubernatorial elections will be taking place, we should take this opportunity to actively promote women for some of the high-level transportation positions in the State. If you are interested in pursuing a position WTS has an Appointments Committee who can assist and together they will work with you toward reaching your goals. Please contact anyone on the WTS CT Valley Board and they will point you in the right direction.

As many of you know, in 2003 WTS Certified their first International Chapter into the organization, the name is “The Straight of Georgia” and they are located in Canada. It was a great feat to bring a new country into the mix. Since this endeavor, London, England is now working toward certification. This being said, the WTS National Board has changed their name to The WTS International Board and WTS is officially an International Organization. This will open many new doors and several new opportunities. As we continue to grow and expand we continue to broaden our horizons and this allows us to expand on some of WTS’ basic beliefs which we all live and breath by “Sharing Experiences” and “Guiding those moving up in the Ranks”. Watch us GROW!
In February of this year the International President of WTS Sunnie House” and WTS Director at Large “Dedi Gonga” visited our chapter. Many of the CT Valley board and some members met with them at the Rusty Scupper in New Haven for a luncheon. Both Sunnie and Dedi are long time WTS activists who spoke extensively about the organization and stressed to the group that they could call on WTS International to assist with any issues related to the organization. They opened the lines of communications and answered many questions regarding routine information about WTS. In addition, they shared all the newest happenings within the organization and what can be expected in the near future.

In closing I would also like to encourage each and every member to attend the WTS International conference in May 2005, in Scottsdale, Arizona. It is an investment that you and your employer can make that will reap benefits for you both now and into the future. The WTS conference is jammed with exceptional sessions, extremely insightful tours of working transportation facilities, workshops and networking opportunities. On a more personal note, I also want to add that no other conference is as inspirational or energizing as a WTS conference. If you have ever been to WTS conferences, you know what I am talking about. If you have not, it is truly something you need to experience.

Thanks to the WTS CT Valley Board and Committee Members that have all worked so hard to make 2004 successful. And I would also like to wish all of you a warm and healthy spring.

Sofia Nirshberg, P.E.
WTS CT Valley President
WTS CT Valley Chapter Annual Meeting

This year’s Annual Meeting was held at The 500 Blake Street Café in New Haven on Tuesday, April 5, 2005. It was nice to have a group of 55 people from various consulting and engineering firms and the CT-DOT. We were fortunate to have CT-DOT Deputy Commissioner Carl Bard as our Speaker this year. He provided an overview of the up-to-date overview of the status on transportation and transit funding and how it will affect the State of Connecticut.

With the Awards Reception canceled on February 24, 2005 due to inclement weather, the Chapter Awards were presented at the Annual Meeting. Our Chapter Immediate Past President Leslie Haines, P.E., Dewberry presented Moira Lyons, former Speaker of the House of Representatives for the State of CT, with the “Woman of the Year” Award. As former House Chair of the Transportation Committee, Moira gave a brief presentation, applauding the work that our men and women are doing for the improvement and expansion of transit and transportation for our State. Our Chapter Vice President, Roberta Yegedis, Administrative Officer for the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority, presented the “Employer of the Year” Award to Dewberry. With a large representation present from Dewberry, Leslie Haines accepted the Award on behalf of her Company. Our Chapter President Sofia Nirshberg, P.E., VN Engineers presented the Chapter’s “WTS Member of the Year” to “yours truly”, Barbara Smith from DMJM+HARRIS for having served as the Chapter’s Special Events Chair for this current term and her previous position as the Chapter’s Secretary. Board Members did an excellent job of keeping the nomination entirely a secret so this Award was very much a surprise, and I thank everyone.

It was a pleasant evening. We look forward to more programs throughout the year and hope you will be able to attend.

Barbara Smith, Special Events Chair
DMJM+HARRIS

Member of the Year Award Presentation to Barbara Smith by Sofia Nirshberg, WTS CT Valley Chapter President

Employer of the Year Award presented to Leslie Haines, Dewberry by Roberta Yegidis, Vice President
We Need Your Input

If you have changed employers, have a new telephone number, or a new email address please let us know. If you no longer wish to receive invitations to Chapter events, please advise. Or, if you know of someone who would like to be placed on our mailing list, we will be happy to include him or her.

The Chapter would like to offer several more programs this year. We are always open to new ideas.

Plans for our summer outing will need to be made soon. If you have any suggestions, please let me know by June 1. Last year, we had a lot of fun when we took the Dinner Train from Essex. It has been suggested that we do something different this year. We usually have the outing on the first Friday in August. One idea is to have something by the Shore like a barbecue or cocktail hour with hor'dourves or casual dinner at some place that might have an island theme, preferably a place that would have shelter in the event of rain. I have heard of a dinner cruise on the Sound that leaves from Norwalk.

We will have a speaker program around the latter part of September or early October with a speaker yet to be determined. Keeping in mind that the topic would relate to transportation or transit, one or more of you may have someone in mind. Considering that people travel from a wide variety of towns and cities around CT to attend our events, perhaps you have a suggestion for someplace different to hold our speaker program.

Last but not least, the Holiday Social is usually held the first Wednesday in December. We always select a local charity from the area where we hold the Social. This past year, we enjoyed hor d'ourves and cheer at Cornerstones in Middletown. It was a very nice evening, and we had a nice variety of donations for the New Horizons Domestic Violence Services, a safe house for battered women and their children that provide support services in the Middlesex County area of CT.
Donations ranged from telephone calling cards, department or grocery store gift cards, children’s books to monetary gifts. The shelter was very pleased and sent a very nice thank you letter. Again, if you have any suggestions, it is not too early to start making plans.

We would also like to know if you prefer the availability of more programs throughout the year. This is your Chapter, and we want to provide programs that are interesting, motivational and fun. Thank you for your assistance.

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WTS CT Valley Chapter  
Special Events Chair  
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### Upcoming Events


**Friday, August 5, 2005 – Summer Outing**

@ Goodspeed Opera House and Gelston House Beer Garden. The Goodspeed Opera House is in East Haddam, and the play, directed by Julie Andrews, is “The Boyfriend,” a 1920s musical comedy. Ticket prices range from $22 to $51. The play starts at 7:30 p.m.; attendees will meet before the play at 6 p.m. at the Gelston House, located next to the Goodspeed Opera House. The Beer Garden, one venue in the Gelston House, offers live entertainment and a fixed dinner price. WTS will coordinate the dinner and let individuals purchase the play tickets on their own.

**September 2005 - Speaker Program**

WTS “members only” event with state legislators and the members of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB). The format of the event will be cocktails and appetizers with time for socializing and a question and answer period. Probable location is in Hartford, near the Capitol.

**First Wednesday in December, 2005**

Holiday social (location to be announced later).
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