Where Do I Go From Here?...

BY VIRGINIA BORKOSKI

The writer is the WTS-GNY Professional Development Committee Co-Chair and Design Manager for MTA Capital Construction.

That’s the question over 20 WTS-GNY members came to hear the answer to at a sold-out members-only breakfast entitled, “Taking the Next Steps in Your Career,” held May 12th at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s (PANYNJ) offices at One Madison Avenue. The panel consisted of three highly accomplished women who have achieved exceptional levels of success within the transportation field. The event was sponsored by the Professional Development Committee, co-chaired by Virginia Borkoski and Yevgeniya Shpigel, and moderated by Maria Garcia, WTS-GNY Director-at-Large.

The three panelists, who generously shared experiences and advice, were Jennifer Strasser, Principal and New York Office Director at Cambridge Systematics, which specializes in ITS; Judith Kunoff, Chief Architect at MTA New York City Transit; and Denise Berger, Deputy Director-Operations, Engineering Department, PANYNJ.

Participants looked to the seasoned panelists for direction, advice, inspiration and straight talk, and that’s just what they received.

Judith started off the discussion, emphasizing that you should be passionate about what you do. She highlighted the importance of taking calculated risks and being patient with the process of achieving success. Judith also encouraged networking and building relationships within the industry to open doors to new opportunities.

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you do and ready to expect anything at any time. She advised that proving yourself and establishing your credibility will improve your position in negotiating career direction and advancement.

Denise shared her prescription for success: “Feel challenged and motivated, and be a great communicator.” She reminded the participants to be their own advocates and determine what they want when climbing the career ladder.

“Go above and beyond what’s expected, and don’t expect anything,” Jennifer said in her opening remarks.

As part of the general discussion regarding balancing work/life issues, she advised not to overcommit oneself. This was something to which everyone could relate. “Take advantage of opportunities to talk about your work and its value to your organization.”

Other helpful points brought out during the meeting were:
- Find a mentor and/or become one yourself.
- Define your goals.
- Reach your potential, and then keep reaching.
- Be familiar with your industry, profession, and clients.
- Be open to change, and ready when an opportunity presents itself.

Planning your career improves your chances to move ahead. Being out there and visible to your organization, clients and colleagues; making contacts; furthering your education and attaining credentials that are valued in the industry can all lead to increasing your value, while providing opportunities for advancement.

Of course, volunteering and being actively involved in a professional organization such as WTS can be a stage on which to showcase your talents. Jennifer shared her personal story of becoming very involved with WTS. “There were so many levels of support. [Being exposed] to people from many different transportation backgrounds and being a part of the organization really did a lot for me.”

The overwhelming sentiment was that your career is in your own hands. It is, and will be, what you make of it. In the end, Judith’s advice rings clear and true. “Be passionate about what you do…the rest will follow.”

The Professional Development Committee thanks all of the panelists and the moderator for making this event a true success.

Event volunteers: Virginia Borkoski, Yeugeniya Shpigel and Maria Garcia.

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK
continued from page 1

This August also marked the first in a series of technical programs aimed at addressing our members’ need for continuing education credits. Please keep an eye out for more information on the series in September and October.

Mentoring
Our 8th annual mentoring program has been a great success. Note that applications for the 2010 program will soon be available on our website. For more information, please contact Allison Davis or Brenda McIntosh.

The Greater New York Chapter has implemented a new event notification system to make the process of responding to, and paying for, events faster and easier. We would be grateful for your feedback on the system and any program suggestions that you may have.

As we close the book on a summer of fun and learning, we invite you to plan to attend an upcoming meeting or professional development program. As always, they are planned with you, our members, in mind. I look forward to greeting you at an event in the near future.

Jenny Kapelyan
President GNY Chapter
(646) 252-4407 kapelyan@7subway.com
Members in the News

Daniella Bernett, the WTS-GNY Newsletter Committee Chair and Research Manager for STV Incorporated, will have her second poetry collection, entitled Silken Reflections, published by Maryland-based PublishAmerica. The book will be released on October 10th. Timeless Allure, her first collection, was published in 2004 also by PublishAmerica. Both feature 50 poems revolving around the themes of life, love, romance and nature.

Kim Haas, an apprentice in the 2009 WTS-GNY Mentoring program and President of Haas Media LLC, was named the winner of the 2009 SCORE Award for Outstanding Minority Owned Business. Haas Media LLC, a public relations and communications firm based in the New York City metropolitan area provides public involvement services (public relations, community outreach, translation and engineering educational initiatives) on transportation and infrastructure projects. Haas Media LLC is currently providing services for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s largest highway reconstruction projects. SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Christie Marcella, WTS-GNY Programs Co-Chair (NY), a transportation planner and public involvement specialist at Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, passed the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) exam. Christie has coordinated and overseen numerous public involvement efforts for public agencies, particularly in the New York/New Jersey region. She has made presentations about the firm’s projects at several conferences, including New Jersey’s annual TransAction convention.

Jennifer Strasser, a WTS-GNY member and Cambridge Systematics’ New York Office Director, has been promoted to Principal. She is one of three founding members of the firm’s New York operation. Jennifer has more than 13 years of experience in intelligent transportation systems (ITS), transportation planning and traffic engineering. She has worked on some of New York City’s largest projects, including the proposed Congestion Pricing Plan for the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the New York City DOT. As the Project Manager, she was responsible for developing white papers for the appointed Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission containing technical analysis and policy research on various topics related to congestion pricing and alternative congestion management strategies. She is the co-author of a recently-published Institute of Transportation Engineers Informational Report on the Management and Operations of ITS. Aside from WTS, Jennifer is a member of the Board of Directors of the Intelligent Transportation Society of New York.

Jennifer Strasser

WTS/GNY 2009 Annual Cocktail Reception
Save the Date: Thursday, October 15, 2009

6:00 PM at Bridgewater’s
11 Fulton Street
South Street Seaport

Honoree:
Susan Bass Levin, Woman of the Year
Deputy Executive Director
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

Introduced by:
Christopher Ward
Executive Director
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
Catching Up with the Mentoring Program

BY ALLISON DAVIS

The writer is the WTS-GNY Mentoring Committee Co-Chair and a Senior Transportation Planner at Arup.

So far this year, aside from the one-on-one mentoring sessions between the mentor-apprentice pairs, we welcomed Sharyn Yorio, president of Sustainable Marketing, Inc., and Denise Richardson, Managing Director of the General Contractors Association of New York, who gave presentations at our events. We also hosted an informal happy hour for the mentors and apprentices to meet one another and to form additional professional relationships.

Sharyn joined us in May to stress the importance of networking as a lifelong skill and how to make connections effectively throughout your career.

In June, Denise highlighted lessons learned to navigate a career across multiple sectors and provided insight on how to make your career what you want it to be.

Many thanks to Sharyn and Denise for volunteering their time and sharing their wisdom with the 2009 Mentors and Apprentices.

The WTS-GNY Mentoring program provides a forum for women seeking to develop the skills necessary to achieve greater levels of success in both their professional and personal lives. The program offers expert guidance and professional development through a shared experience with some of the most successful transportation leaders in the metropolitan area. Applications for the 2010 program will be available online beginning in September 2009. In the meantime, if you are interested in learning more about becoming a mentor or apprentice, please contact any of the Mentoring Committee members:

Allison Davis allison.davis@arup.com
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Ella McLeod Ella.Mcleod@nyct.com
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2009 Apprentices
Barbara Morton, MTA New York City Transit
Janie Chen, MTA Long Island Railroad
Jeevanjot Singh, NJ Department of Transportation
Jignasa Ray, MTA Bridges and Tunnels
JoAnn Anderson, MTA New York City Transit
Kim Haas, Haas Media, LLC
Linda Sylvester, MTA New York City Transit
Marcela Rodriguez, Parsons Transportation Group
Paula Sandiford, URS
Sonia Corredor, URS

2009 Mentors
Carl Selinger, Carl Selinger Services
Janice Li, Lea & Elliot
Malinda Foy, MTA New York City Transit
Patrick Smith, MTA New York City Transit
Peter Aviles, MTA New York City Transit
Rena Barta, PBS&J
Robert Redding, MTA Bridges and Tunnels
Trent Lethco, Arup
Virginia Borkoski, MTA Capital Construction
William Rodwick, MTA New York City Transit

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Virginia Borkoski, MTA Capital Construction
William Rodwick, MTA New York City Transit

The writer is the WTS-GNY Mentoring Committee Co-Chair and a Senior Transportation Planner at Arup.

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Planning for New Jersey’s Future

BY BETH DEANGELO

The writer is the WTS-GNY Programs Co-Chair (NJ) and Area Manager-North Jersey for Parsons Brinckerhoff.

The timing was perfect for WTS-GNY’s “North Jersey Transportation Authority’s Plan 2035” luncheon meeting held on June 17th at the Newark Club. The Authority (NJTPA) has been working for over a year to update North Jersey’s Regional Transportation Plan. Release of the results was scheduled for one week after the meeting. The NJTPA speakers, Mary K. Murphy, Executive Director, and Lois Goldman, Director of Regional Planning, provided an early glimpse at the plan that NJTPA has invested much time and creativity to develop. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) joined WTS in hosting the event.

Statistics about North Jersey were streaming steadily during the presentation: 7.8 million people, 384 municipalities, 4,200 square miles, 19,000 miles of road network, 177 miles of toll roads, 250 local/express bus routes, $2 billion annual transportation investment program…get the picture? But what kept the audience intrigued was what the future holds: population, jobs and vehicle miles traveled with growth around the 15 percent mark; transit ridership and traffic congestion growth closer to 50 percent; and freight travel expected to double.

In developing Plan 2035, NJTPA conducted extensive open houses and used an interactive website to solicit public input. The website was displayed during the luncheon for those that had not yet contributed to the process. Robert Dioga, NJTPA Principal Planner GIS & Modeling, and Dave Behrend, NJTPA Manager of Public Relations, navigated meeting attendees through the site on computers at the Newark Club.

Young Professionals on the Fast Track to Success

BY SARAH KAUFMAN

The writer is the WTS-GNY Young Professionals Committee Co-Chair and a Project Coordinator, Emerging and Intelligent Transportation Systems, at MTA New York City Transit.

The WTS-GNY Young Professionals Committee hosted its first major event, Speed Networking, on June 23rd at the Port Authority of NY and NJ’s (PANY&NJ) offices on Madison Avenue.

The event kicked off with a presentation by Sally Handley, a marketing expert and owner of Sally Handley Inc., a consulting, training and staffing company. She discussed how one’s professional network is a lifelong resource.

“While she made [it] look easy,” said Amy Zwas, one of the participants, “she had lots of tips for speed networking, as well as for [making contacts] at other venues. She cited good examples to demonstrate that everyone wins by making connections.”

Following Sally’s presentation, the participants – about 30 young professionals and eight established professionals from consulting firms, city and state agencies, service providers, and academia – began Speed Networking. In this forum, they met one-on-one for four-minute stretches, then switched partners, for a total of eight interactions. The Networkers discussed their line of work and developed their conversation starters. Graduate students and professionals with 20-plus years of experience were able to find common ground.

Stay tuned for the committee’s next major event in September: a Wii Mario Kart Kontest in Hoboken. Test your driving and networking skills at once! Details coming soon.

Event volunteers: Julia Kerson, Gretchen Minneman, Beth Gordon and Leah Flax.
A Night on the Intrepid

BY DANIELLA BERNETT

The writer is the WTS-GNY Newsletter Committee Chair and Research Manager for STV Incorporated.

On a balmy early August evening, WTS-GNY members and non-members gathered for a delightful interlude aboard the Intrepid. The group had access to every corner of this impressive former aircraft carrier, which saw action in World War II; provided submarine surveillance in the North Atlantic during the Cold War; served three tours of duty off Vietnam; and was one of the primary recovery vessels for NASA. Today, this old warrior is docked at Pier 86 on the Hudson River and the home to a sea, air and space museum.

A light buffet dinner was served on the deck, where everyone mingled to network, chat or simply to enjoy one another’s company as they caught up on the latest events in their professional and personal lives. WTS-GNY also held a Silent Auction for foursomes and threesomes that had been offered by Split Rock Golf Course for October 8th as a consolation since the chapter’s Golf Outing was cancelled this year because of the heavy rain.

As a soft breeze rippled across the silver-green surface of the water and the setting sun cast dusty apricot shadows, the lovely views of the Manhattan skyline and the river seduced the senses allowing everyone to relinquish cares, at least for a little while, to the night. When it came time to leave, regret was etched upon everyone’s face.

WTS Hosts Its First Technical Program

The WTS-GNY Accreditation Committee hosted its first one-hour technical seminar on August 12th. The course was designed to allow attending members to earn one PDH credit toward retaining their professional status as engineers and/or planners in NY. The presentation on South Carolina’s Cooper River Bridge by Michael J. Abrahams of Parsons Brinckerhoff provided valuable information about the project. In particular, he shed some light on the challenges of building around existing structures, the major wetland conservation effort necessary and provisions required to accommodate the high seismic activity in the area. Additionally, Mike discussed the risks and rewards of a design-build project. Thanks to WTS for another terrific member benefit.

The committee is also arranging September and October technical programs in NYC and NJ, respectively.

Event volunteers: Linda Travis, Priscilla Yip.
A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

The list reflects the new members who joined the chapter up until press time.

Danielle Alviggi  
Schiavoone Construction Co.

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Parsons Brinckerhoff

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Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Mary Fuentes  
MTA New York City Transit

Anna Garrilidis  
Sherwood Electromotion Inc.

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NYC Department of Transportation

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