

NAYGN FOCUS:

Out of this World

August 6th, 2015

The Chair of the 2014 NAYGN Regional Chapter of the Year, Parastoo Muse of GE Hitachi, discusses the pillars of NAYGN, the Coke and Mentos experiment, and interstellar blue aliens with members of the Recruiting and Retention Committee.

[Lauren] Thank you, Parastoo, for being here for to chat about your chapter, GE Hitachi!

[Parastoo] You're welcome! I'm Parastoo Muse, and I'm the Chair of our local NAYGN at GE Hitachi. I'm currently in a position in our new plants division doing Schedule and Cost Analysis.

[L] How big is your NAYGN chapter?

[P] We have about 250 people on the roster, but we don't kick anyone out with regard to our distribution lists. When we do events we typically have twenty to thirty people show up, and we have about ten to twenty to active members.

[L] That's a huge roster! How long have you personally been involved with your chapter?

[P] I've been around about four years. I started as the Metrics chair, then I was a co-Chair, and now I'm the Chair. I'll be moving on after this to let other people take leadership roles.

[L] How long have you been with GE Hitachi?

[P] I've been with GE for nine years, and the reason I joined NAYGN was because somebody introduced me to it, which was great. It was the best way for me to get to know other individuals in my company, not just in my division.

[L] What are some of the events your chapter typically does over the course of a year?

[P] Well, we try to hit all the pillars of NAYGN. We do professional development, recruiting and retentions, public information, and community service. We do a minimum of one event on each pillar a quarter. We tend to have most of our events in the summertime because we have so many members in the field services division, and they tend to be a lot of young people who go from outage to outage doing work, so fall and spring are pretty heavy work seasons for them.



Parastoo Muse, GE Hitachi Chair

beach weekend. They have a plant, Brunswick, not far from Wilmington, and last year we were invited. Friday we do a dinner and social, and Saturday we go to the beach, hang out, and have hamburgers and hotdogs. Saturday night we network again. It's always great having those opportunities at the conference to get to know other NAYGN members, but it's also wonderful being able to solidify that connection with other chapters at the beach.

[L] That sounds like a blast. We don't get many beach networking opportunities here in Glen Rose, Texas, especially not with big, hard-hitting chapters like GE and Duke.

[P] It is definitely big, and many people are coming from a ton of different locations. On Friday night we can have up to sixty people come.

[L] What's been your personal favorite event that your chapter has accomplished this year?

[P] Actually, it hasn't come up yet! My favorite event is one we do every National Nuclear Science Week. It's a drawing contest. We partner up with elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and colleges to speak to them about nu-

[L] That's fun though! It's kind of like being out of school for the summer.

[P] Exactly! We also love to include our interns, so that's another big perk of summer events.

[L] That's some good recruiting; I like to hear it. What's one of the most recent event you guys have done?

[P] This is our second year that we've partnered up with Duke Energy for their yearly



Maggie Hwang, Parastoo Muse, Christopher Kmiec and Alison Thomas pose with the 2013 drawing contest 3rd place winner.



GE-H members pose with Caroline Reda (GE Hitachi President and CEO), Jay Wileman (GM of Nuclear Plant Projects), and Kevin Walsh (CEO of GNF, GM of GEH's Fuels & Services Business) at the NAYGN 2013 Conference.

clear science. This is our fourth year doing it, and it's been impressive seeing how much it's grown within the community.

[L] So do you guys show up at schools with Geiger Counters and PPE?

[P] Depends! For the fourth and fifth graders we actually do the Coke and Mentos experiment with them instead, which they love. Making a mess, you know. For middle school we talk about atoms, and for high school we bring the Geiger Counter. For college-level visits we talk more about nuclear engineering and career options.

[L] What a fun event! So part of the reason your chapter is being interviewed for the *Focus* is because you had so many members who won 2014 Excellence Awards. I can only imagine how proud you and the other officers must be. Can you tell me about the work they accomplished to be nominated, and what set them apart?

[P] I think we've worked very hard to grow our chapter and retain the members we already have. It's definitely not a one-person team. Our co-chair, Maria Pfeffer, is in charge of putting together the conference. That means everything from going to executives for funding to coordinating logistics with our members. She made everybody feel like

they were part of a team, not just an individual member going to the national conferences.

We have a two person Professional Development team, Justin Lamy and Weston Cundiff, who worked really hard setting up quality roundtables and lunch-and-learns on subjects that were really important for the young generation. Things like Knowledge Capture and Transfer. They did a great job planning events where everyone wanted to come and listen to the speakers.

We have our Communications Chair, Christopher Kmiec, who is kind of like the glue who keeps us together. He sends out the information and make sure everyone knows what's going on, which is a delicate balance: you don't want to send out emails every day, but also don't want to go too long without your membership hearing from you. He managed it so well.

Christopher is also our Metrics Chair, who basically gets a score from our audience. "What did you enjoy? What did you not enjoy? What would you like more of in the future?"

Our Networking Committee members, Tom Ganley and Meghan Garner, which is now R&R, put together that great GE/Duke networking event. They also make sure we always have an executive-level representation so the young generation gets to connect with our more experienced employees.

Outreach, comprised of Maggie Hwang and Alison Thomas, which is my favorite arena, does the National Nuclear Science Week. They started building a great relationship with the University of North Carolina in Wilmington. We go out there and do lectures, participate in engineering 101 classes, and judge some of their events.

Everybody worked so hard last year, and that showed as a collective team.

[L] It really did! Y'all won the 2014 Best Chapter in Region Award too. What has been your chapter's most successful method for recruiting new members?

[P] Our co-chair is great at reaching out to new people by just showing up at their cube and introducing herself. Our campus is sort of scattered, so you have to walk from building to building, so even if

she doesn't have the chance to physically stop by, she always sends an introductory email saying who she is and what NAYGN does. It also always comes with an offer to help. She does this for all our interns too.

[L] The interns are such a great investment, especially when they're going to come back full time in a few years or months. For you personally, what's your favorite part of being a chapter lead?

[P] My favorite part is watching other people grow. Watching committee members change as people, and how their leadership skills have evolved in their positions is so rewarding. We're a team, and we accomplish so many great things.

[L] So the flip side of that question: what's your least favorite part of being a chapter lead?

[P] It's important and so necessary, but the paperwork and phone calls are my least favorite. The administrative side is less fun.

[L] Ah yes, the officer's curse. Let me ask you a personality-based question: if you were to pick GE's NAYGN chapter mascot, what animal or mythical creature would you pick?

[P] Oh, that's a hard question. Um... maybe... I would say... Avatar?

[pause]

[P] Have you seen the *Avatar* movie?

[L] Like... the James Cameron *Avatar* movie?

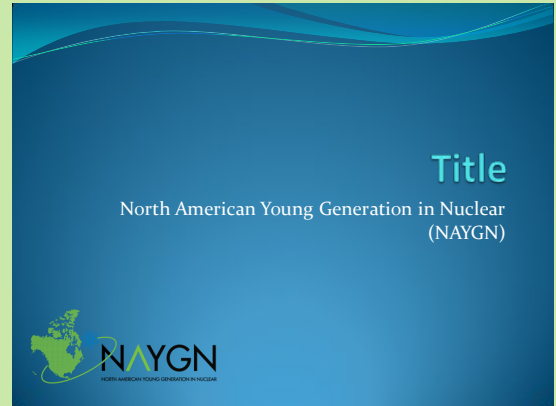
[P] Yes. I know it's not an animal but-

[laughs]

[P] I think being an *Avatar* for us makes a lot of sense. We try to be in so many places at the same time, and we all have our day jobs. Being an officer for me is like having a second day job, but one that I really enjoy. So that aspect

Did you know?

Past issues of the Focus can be found on NAYGN.org under the Resources and Committee Documents tabs? Boilerplate recruiting presentations are also available for use to serve as guidance for NAYGN members participating in outreach activities for their chapters. If you have any questions or would like to see your chapter's presentations featured here, contact Lauren Neuburger (lauren.neuburger@luminant.com) for more details.



of multitasking makes me wish I had an Avatar of me out there helping out.

[L] I'm not going to lie, that's one of the strangest answers I've ever received. What are the aliens called? Na'vi?

[P] Yes! Na'vi!

[L] Well, you know, now I get to have an excuse for including a picture of a blue alien in the next *Focus*.

[P] Yay! You're welcome.

[L] On that note, let's wrap this interview up! Moving forward, what nugget of information or best practices would you want to pass onto other chapters that you haven't had the opportunity to share yet?

[P] The most important thing is for our officers and committees need to work

together as a team. Don't be afraid to get your feet wet in other committees. Step in when others need help. We worked so well as a team and won the Regional Award last year because our officers made and kept their commitments to the chapter.

[L] That's great advice. I think the types of personalities often attracted to leadership roles tend to take a lot on themselves, and could get potentially overwhelmed.

[P] Exactly. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

[L] Thank you so much for your wise words and time, Parastoo! Congratulations to your and your chapter for the Regional Award and all of the individual Excellence Awards!

[P] You're very welcome, and thank you too!



Meet the Interviewer

Lauren Neuburger is the Engineering Corrective Action Program Coordinator (CAPCO) of Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant, the President of her local chapter, and is the 2015 Recruiting and Retention Committee Lead. She is consistently the only person at work who dresses up for Halloween during refueling outages.