September Edition

By Allie George, External Vice President

It’s been a very active and exciting month for the Georgia Tech chapter of Engineers Without Borders, as classes finally got underway. We held a very successful semesterly recruitment, finalized plans to host our very first Southeast Regional Conference, and enjoyed several informative speakers at our general meetings over the past few weeks. We are off to a great start this fall, and invite you to read on for more updates on our progress!

Recruitment
We are thrilled to announce that we received unprecedented interest in our club this year! We closed the application process after receiving well over 300 new member applications. There was a full house at both the Info Session and the New Member Orientation which we held early this month, with standing room only at both. Once more, we were successful in reaching out to a very diverse group, including representatives from environmental engineering to aerospace engineering to computer science. We welcome all of our now fully-matriculated new members, and are excited to see the fresh talent that they will bring to the table!

Travel Plans
Our two international projects, Cameroon and Uganda, are both hard at work on completing the paperwork required to travel this winter break. Cameroon will be shooting for a final implementation trip, while Uganda will be undertaking an additional assessment trip. The travel teams and mentors for both of these trips will be announced within the month.

Advisory Board
The advisory board meeting for the fall semester has been set for 5:30 – 6:30 pm on October 31st, during Homecoming Weekend. We are expecting this to be an excellent chance for our honorary advisors to meet some of our members, and hope to see you all there! Keep an eye out for additional information on the meeting closer to the date.

How Can I Help?
Looking to become more involved in our chapter? We highly encourage you to attend our semesterly Advisory Board Meeting. This will be a great chance to provide assistance and feedback directly to senior club members, as well as project leaders.

Southeast Regional Conference
We are so excited to welcome EWB chapters from across the southeast to Atlanta! We hosted the SE Regional Conference last weekend, and can’t wait to tell all about it.

Navajo Nation’s Spring Break Trip
Our newest official domestic project, Navajo Nation, made their first trip to the community, located in the Bennett Freeze region of Arizona, this past March. Find out more about what they accomplished next month!
Last May, the Engineers Without Borders chapter at Georgia Tech traveled to Cameroon in Western Africa, and I was one of the lucky students who were able to go. This was an assessment trip, and our main objective was to assess the condition of the old well while trying to find a new location for the new well. On May 5, we left Atlanta and flew to Doula, Cameroon with a layover in Paris. When we first landed in Doula, we found our community contact Bong Evaristus, and went to a hotel to rest for the night. The next morning, we met with a driller and our mentor, a geologist by profession, and were able to talk about the specifications of the new well that needs to be drilled. The conversation that afternoon was extremely interesting. The driller was a man who only spoke Chinese, while his translator only spoke French. Luckily, another member of our group was extremely fluent in French, and he was able to translate the translator. After talking with the driller, we were able to meet with a contractor and learn about the type of drilling that is used, and the pipes and sizes that are normally used in Cameroon. We then left for Mungoa-goa, our community where the well is being built, and one entire day was spent traveling. Doula, the business capital of Cameroon, and Mungoa-goa are about an 8 hour drive apart. The drive to the community was beautiful. Cameroon is a gorgeous country that is full of trees, greenery, and vegetation. The people are vibrant and very welcoming. On our first day we met a man wearing a Georgia Tech jersey, which made us extremely excited.

When we first reached Mungoa-goa, we were welcomed by the entire community, who performing a dance in our honor. All the men were playing instruments and dancing: it was a vibrant welcome that I know I will never experience anywhere else. We spent the rest of that day getting acquainted with all of the members of the community and resting. The next day though, the work began. We assessed all the parts of the system that were already built, including the well, solar panels and the tank. That day was focused around pulling the pump out of the well and inspecting all of its components. Then, we conducted water flowrate tests and tried to measure the depth of the water table. The water level meter our mentor brought was too short, so we had to use a string to estimate where the water level was in relation to the pump. The next day, we took measurements of the voltage that the pump used from the solar panels and with the help of the community members, removed the pump from the well so we could inspect it. From our observations, we realized that the pump was pulling up sediment along with the water and was causing a small problem in which the valve was unable to close properly. Also, that day, we used our water testing kits to make sure that the water from the tank was not contaminated.

After taking all of the measurements needed, we spent the day focusing on educational initiatives, visiting the local primary school and speaking with all of the students. They were all very attentive, but also rather shy. Most of the children had never seen foreigners, and were surprised by us. We handed out balloons to the children and they were extremely happy. It was such a wonderful moment to see the kids so enamored with their balloons. Also, during our time in the community, we met with two doctors who were working near the community via an organization similar to Doctors Without Borders. We were able to talk with them and get their perspective about living in Cameroon and serving the people. They were a wonderful pair whom I would like to visit again during our next trip in December.

On our last day in the community, we spent the day climbing Mount Boyo, one of the mountains in Cameroon. It was not a very steep climb but it was still tiring. That was my first time climbing a mountain and I was able to summit it, which was very satisfying. After climbing the mountain, we said our goodbyes to the community members and we left for the airport. One thing that I learned on this trip was how truly rewarding it is to help another person. I was disappointed that I had to leave, but at the same time, I was content with coming back home. I returned home on my birthday, and being able to be with my family on that special day was the best present ever.
Meet the Executive Board

President – Lily Ponitz

My name is Lily Ponitz and I’m from Sarasota, Florida. I’m a senior in Environmental Engineering, and the current President of EWB-GT. I started with EWB-GT as a freshman working on the Cameroon Program. I traveled to Cameroon twice during my second year before becoming president. I chose to study environmental engineering and join EWB because I wanted to use engineering to help people, specifically by providing access to clean water and sanitation in developing countries. My involvement in EWB-GT has helped me develop into a much better engineer and leader, and I work every day to improve and expand the organization so that other students can experience the personal growth that I did.

Outside of EWB-GT, I play Ultimate Frisbee and am a captain of Wreck, the Georgia Tech Women’s Club Ultimate team, as well as a member of club-level and local league teams. Some of my other interests include bike riding, drinking craft beer, exploring new cities, and going to concerts.

Initiatives:
- Creating and maintain the EWB-GT Advisory Board
- Developing our club’s “Side Projects” into official EWB-USA registered programs
- Increasing and diversifying EWB-GT’s membership base

Secretary – Shannon Felts

Hi, my name is Shannon Felts. I’m from Dunwoody Georgia, and I am a second year at Georgia Tech pursuing a degree in Industrial Engineering. I am the Secretary of Engineers Without Borders. I joined EWB last year when I was a freshman and joined the Navajo Nation team. I have absolutely no idea what I want to do in the future, but I love where I am now. I love being involved with EWB because I think it is such a neat way to pair our engineering problem-solving with doing good around the world. It is such an interactive community, all focused outwardly on bettering the world.

Outside of EWB, I play the guitar, play sports like volleyball and soccer, and love being involved with other miscellaneous activities around Tech’s campus.

Initiatives:
- Integrate role-taking, dues-paying, and attendance with a Buzzcard/GTID system
- Ensure that our chapter website is updated, modern, and accessible
- Eventually transfer this chapter website to GT servers
- Maintain the regional conference website for the year

Webmaster – Walker Argendeli

Hey, my name’s Walker Argendeli and I’m the Webmaster for EWB-GT this year! I’m a pre-med, computer science, and psychology student whose weird mix of classes is in preparation for grad school in computational/cognitive neuroscience. I’ve been a part of the Cameroon project’s fundraising efforts since last year, and thought I’d get a bit more involved this time around. It’s exciting to watch our club grow and move forward in leaps and bounds, but it also makes the Executive Board’s initiatives, and administrative/communication tasks, that much more difficult. I hope to help streamline this process over the upcoming semesters.

I enjoy filling what little of my free time is left with cooking, playing finger-style guitar, and putting around the weight room with the vague intention of finding time to seriously train for a triathlon sometime in the near future.

Some of our Executive Board members on the spring 2013 bi-annual leadership retreat
Meet the Executive Board (Continued)

Hello, I’m Angela C. Belfort, a Civil Engineering undergraduate student with a focus in the geotechnical area. I am also minoring in International Affairs. I am so excited to be serving EWB-GT as the group’s social chair this year, and have several great ideas which I am trying to implement.

We will be using trash generated from our general meetings as raw material that will be sold as a product. Our trash will be used to make other products, from backpacks to pencils, and will be resold back to the public, bypassing dump sites. The money generated from our recycling program will be seed money for humanitarian causes, like drilling wells and building shelter. Our upcycling project provides an opportunity to explore entrepreneurship and finances within a project.

I am currently working with the Waste Management & Recycling Office, Coca-Cola, and the Student Government Association’s Sustainability Committee to implement an “upcycling” program, which will be the first of its kind here at Georgia Tech. The “Green Goes Global” theme from the Earth Day celebration at Georgia Tech presents a great opportunity to educate the student body on green technology like upcycling.

My name is Lydia Hylton, and I am from Falls Church, Virginia. I am an Electrical Engineering undergraduate student set to graduate in May 2016. In the meantime, I am serving as Historian for EWB-GT. I love EWB because it brings together my academic interests with my desire to do community service work, and help to make the world a better place. I love being able to share what interests me with my fellow students, as well as hear about their passions as well.

Initiatives:

- Organize the Executive Board’s archives and file-sharing technologies
- Document meetings and keep track of major developments
- Help set up a standardized documentation system to aid students in future years

Don’t Forget!

Who: Advisory Board Members and EWB - GT Leadership

What: EWB - GT Advisory Board Meeting

Where: Mason 2117

When: 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 31st

We’ll see you there!