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Spirited group



Industry Appreciation Dinner brought industry leaders to the table.

The girls were busy in March promoting women in construction at the **National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC)** WIC Week events.

The San Antonio chapter held its annual Industry Appreciation Dinner Mar. 7 at the Petroleum Club featuring **Charlie Conner**, chairman of the board of Alamo Community College District.

"Conner spoke on the growth in the construction industry for San Antonio and the surrounding areas and the impact the growth is having on the workforce," said **Terri Pasley**, membership chairman and past president.

In recognition of WIC Week the chapter encouraged members to bring a prospective member to the annual Wine & Cheese Mixer held Mar. 15. The event



NAWIC members and guests enjoyed a variety of wines, like Marilyn Merlot, at the annual Wine & Cheese Mixer.

gave members the opportunity to network and show the lighter side of the association.

WIC Week's purpose is to increase awareness and visibility of women working in the construction industry. —kf

Industry FOLKS

Mona Lisa Smith
Primo Welding



MonaLisa Smith never thought she'd be a foreman at a welding company.

"When I was a girl," she said, "I wanted to be a ballerina. I just loved those pink tutus we wore for Miss Alvin's annual recital.

"I even still have my tutu from my last recital, when I was 10," she confided.

"Of course, it no longer fits me," she added.

"It's too-too small."

Smith is known at Primo Welding for her superior welding ability and her fondness for cheap puns.

She also loves to crochet. Thanks to Smith, the extra toilet roll in the women's rest room at Primo is topped with a brunette doll torso, wearing an exquisite crocheted pink yarn ball-gown.

The San Antonio native is one of those people who make their companies fun places to work. Baking is another of her special talents, and Smith brings in homemade oatmeal cookies on Wednesdays, payday at Primo.

As is usually the case, it was a guy who got Smith into the welding world.

"As a high school freshman, I was nuts about Jimmie Larson," she said. "Registration Week, I followed him right into Welding!"

A crush on a boy got her into the class, but the excitement of welding got her to stay.

"Girl, once I turned on that blowtorch, I was hooked!" she said.

She went on to take Welding II, Welding III and Welding IV, excelling in every single area of metalwork. In her spare time during high school, she made window guards to earn extra money.

As for Jimmie Larson, he decided to become a brain surgeon. Using her talent as a welder, his bride put him through UT Austin and UT Galveston.

Today the Smith-Larsons live in Live Oak with their three children, Mona, Lisa, and Jim, and their dogs, Lars and Son, and their cat, Jimona. The family enjoys yearly vacations in Europe and the Far East. "We love to do things as a family," she said. "This June we're going on a walking tour on the Ho Chi Minh Trail."

After her husband finished medical school, Smith moved back to San Antonio in 1993.

That same year she was hired on at Primo. Her abilities were soon recognized, and she was quickly promoted to assistant foreman. Two years later, she was named foreman of a 15-welder crew.

"I can't ask for a better bunch of people," she said. "I love these guys!"

MonaLisa also likes to write April Fools stories!