

SPE Palisades-MidAtlantic Spring News

Scholarship Application is open – due April 30, 2025

The Palisades-Midatlantic Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) is proud to offer academic scholarships to associated members who have demonstrated excellence in various fields of study. See our website (spe-pma.org) and the [scholarship page](#) for the available scholarships and criteria. If you, or a family member, are interested in applying, please submit the required documents by April 30, 2025. If you would like to learn more about our scholarships, which honor our Section members, you can read the history [here](#). If you are not a current member of SPE but you are interested in joining or becoming affiliated with the SPE Palisades-Midatlantic Section, please contact us at spepalisadesmidatlantic@gmail.com or visit www4spe.org.

You can also find Section News (such as the scholarship announcement) on our LinkedIn page - [linkedin.com/in/spe-palisades-midatlantic](https://www.linkedin.com/in/spe-palisades-midatlantic) . You can comment or repost to help spread the word.

Mark's Minute

A message from our current section president, Mark Lavach

Where Have You Gone PMA?

Taking some liberty with language from Simon and Garfunkel's classic song, Mrs. Robinson, just seemed appropriate for my communication. After a robust end of our 2023 calendar year, publicly things looked like we went on hiatus. There were multiple reasons for this, but some of this had to do with me. The last year has been busy, both from a personal and SPE perspective, with multiple activities, a big part of it having to do with my retirement from Arkema on January 31, 2025 (after 40+ years). Not only did I retire, but we moved to Ohio (to be near the grandchildren), built a new house, and did all of the FUN things you get to do when you retire. Things like Social Security, Medicare, getting new doctors, getting the house setup (an ongoing project), babysitting. I also helped author and edit several chapters in the next edition of the PVC Handbook. That's the personal part, and I can tell you what every other retiree I've known has said, you get real busy, real fast.

That's not to say the Chapter was not operating in the background, but we did so quietly. Here is a listing of some of our member's activities.

Members of our Finance and Education Committee awarded over \$25K in educational scholarships last year. We also renewed commitment to support of PLASTIVAN. The

Chapter, under the guidance of Steve Duerr, Art Finkle, and Stephanie Angelo remains financially very healthy.

Our First VP, Brittany Walls served as Technical Program Chair for VINYLTEC 2024 in Chicago, putting together a first-rate program at one of the world's leading conferences on vinyl technology. Numerous other members of the chapter participated as well, either thru participation on the various committees or by giving talks.

In conjunction with PMAD, we hosted FOAMS 24 in King of Prussia PA. This annual 4-day conference was packed with the latest updates in polymer foams technology. Special thanks to Stu Kapp and Sal Monte for their support of the event.

And so many of our members continue to be active in various other endeavors (Maggie Baumann – PINFA, Jack Dispenza – Additive Manufacturing, and let's not forget our two globetrotters; Peggy Schipper and Robert Smith. Just follow either one of them on Linked-In or Facebook and you can see what I mean.

And finally, a thank you to our Editor, Jennifer Markarian for quietly reminding me to get my you know what in gear.

So, while things have been quiet – it's been quite busy!

The PMA Board is currently drafting ideas to revitalize chapter activities. We realize the days of face-to-face meetings have probably come and gone, especially with the geographic diversity our chapter has, but we can still make a difference. If you would like to "make a difference", please let us know.

In closing and taking some liberty again from Mrs. Robinson,

The PMA has not left and gone away.

Mark Lavach

Chapter Member News

Over the past year, a few of our chapter membership have received awards of note:

Robert Smith (PMC Organometallix) – Best Technical Presentation – VINYLTEC 2023

Peggy Schipper (Performance Additives) – Technical Contributions to Vinyl

Award. Awarded by the Vinyl Chapter, it recognizes meritorious technical contributions to the that have played a significant role in the development of the vinyl industry. Peggy joins a long list of distinguished PMA alumni who have received this award

Mark Lavach (Arkema) – Honored Service Award, SPE National. According to SPE Bylaws, "To be elected an Honored Service Member (HSM), a candidate shall have demonstrated long-term, outstanding service to, and support of, the Society and its objectives; shall be sponsored, in writing, by the Board of Directors of at least one Section or Division." Since SPE's Honored Service Member (HSM) Award was established in 1992, [364 members](#) have been awarded this prestigious title. 25 of these have come from the PMA Chapter and its legacy Sections. This is in addition to the 60+ members of our chapter who have been designated a Fellow of the Society.

Several of our members, including **Steve Duerr, Art Finkle, Brian Gibson and Bob Kappus** are also members of the SPE Loyalty Society for their support of the SPE Foundation.

As a member of the SPE Foundation Ambassador Society, The Palisades Mid-Atlantic Section achieved the level of Grand Patron. The establishment of the SPE Foundation Ambassador Giving Society aims to recognize and honor our most generous and dedicated partners. The individuals, SPE Chapters, and entities listed below have made substantial contributions, actively promoting and bolstering our programs dedicated to providing Positive Plastics Education™ to students worldwide. Their exceptional support not only furthers our mission, but also inspires future generations to build on the important work our colleagues have accomplished in the plastics industry.

Rob Decker was appointed President of Norac Additives, LLC, a subsidiary of the Peter Greven Group, located in Ambler, PA. Rob joined Norac in 2013 and held the position of Technical Sales and Service Manager for the Plastics Additives Division in North America.

Salvatore J. & Erika G. Monte, owners of S&E Innovative Technologies, LLC and Kenrich Petrochemicals, Inc., announced issuance of a US patent on Jan. 21, 2025 entitled "Construction Materials, Compositions and Methods of Making Same" as a continuance of a 2023 patent, claiming the compatibilization of Portland cement with PE and graphene reinforcements. This is Sal's 37th patent. You can read more on 4kenrich.com.

Congratulations to all! If you are aware of any other awards received by members, please let us know, and we are happy to share their news in a future newsletter.