

Comic Book Engineering

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ASME has launched a new comic strip series to introduce and educate young readers about the history and contributions of mechanical engineering. Each month throughout 2005, the Web-based "funnies" will feature entertaining short stories about amazing engineering accomplishments during the past 125 years since ASME was founded in 1880. The first edition of "Heroes of Engineering" is now available at anniversary.asme.org/

"The goal of the comics is to create a fun online medium that could teach young people about what engineers do and how, through their creative genius, they have made our world a better place to live," said Captain Vincent Wilczynski, Ph.D., vice president of ASME's Board on Pre-College Education and a professor of mechanical engineering at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

Wilczynski, along with Coast Guard petty officer and aspiring comics creator and artist, Ron Spellman, introduced the comic series to ASME as a voluntary outreach to young people during the Society's 125th anniversary year. "We hope that the colorful and fun-to-read comics will help inspire the next generation of engineers and inventors," said Wilczynski.

The first of 12 comics features the contributions of Robert Henry Thurston (1839-1903), an author and pioneer in mechanical engineering education. Thurston provided a means for students to bring the theories of engineering into practice by establishing the first mechanical engineering laboratory model, in 1875, at the Steven Institute of

Technology, Hoboken, N.J. He also served as the first president of ASME (1880-1802).

The comic series will cover 12 decades of interesting and perhaps the not-so-well-known significant accomplishments in mechanical engineering. For example in February, learn about Michael Owens' patent of the automatic bottle making machine; in March, the development of the Wright Brothers wind tunnel, and in April, the story of Garrett Morgan, an African American inventor of the "inhalator," better know as the gas mask.

Reviewing each story for historical accuracy and rounding out the volunteer team responsible for writing and producing the monthly comics is J. Lawrence Lee, Ph.D., P.E., and Fellow of ASME. Lee is an engineer-historian at the Historic American Engineering Record, a branch of the U.S. National Parks Service, and is a former chair of the ASME History and Heritage Committee.

Source: ASME

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