

### APRIL DINNER MEETING

American Society of Civil Engineers, Philadelphia Section,  
Engineers' Club of Philadelphia

### THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2007

**Union League** • 140 South Broad Street (at Sansom Street), Center City Philadelphia  
Cocktails 5:30 PM • Dinner 6:30 PM • Meeting 7:30 PM

**SUBJECT:** The Comcast Tower

**SPEAKER:** John Abruzzo, P.E., and Anjana Kadakia, P.E., Thornton Tomasetti

**SPECIAL FEATURE: Temple University Night.** The ASCE Student Chapter, Faculty and Alumni of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering of Temple University will be honored at this meeting. All Faculty, Alumni and Students of Temple are cordially invited to attend and participate.

**SPECIAL FEATURE: Past Presidents Night.** All Past Presidents of the ASCE, Philadelphia Section are cordially invited to attend as guests of the Section to be honored for their contributions.

**RESERVATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2007.** Please send your check for the number of attendees at \$40 per member or guest, \$20 per ASCE Student Member. Checks should be made payable to "Philadelphia Section ASCE" and sent to ASCE, PO Box 58186, Philadelphia, PA 19102-8186. Reservations can also be made on the Electronic Message Center, (800) 461-4190, or via e-mail at [info@asce-philly.org](mailto:info@asce-philly.org). Walk-ins will be subject to acceptance on a space-available basis. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE IF YOU DO NOT RESERVE A SPACE.

Philadelphia's skyline is about to change again. After years of being "ruled" by a gentlemen's agreement that no structure should be taller than William Penn's statue atop City Hall, the completion of Liberty Place in 1987 led the way for a number of new skyscrapers that dwarfed the Penn statue. Upon its opening later this year, the new Comcast Tower on John F. Kennedy Boulevard between 17th Street and 18th Street will surpass Liberty Place as the city's tallest building, reaching a height of 975 feet.

The Tower will add 1.1 million square feet of office space to the Center City market, with a 6-story parking garage and retail area at its base. The ground level will offer a large atrium which will also serve as a new entrance to SEPTA's Penn Center/Suburban Station complex. It will also be the first Center City skyscraper to be designed and built using code changes and lessons learned from the World Trade Center destruction.

The speakers will offer an in-depth presentation on the challenges and difficulties faced and resolved with this undertaking. Some of the unique aspects of the building will be covered, including:

- the design and construction of structural systems such as the shear wall, vierendeel trusses, and tuned liquid column damper system
- the preservation of a historic church building that exists in the northwest quadrant of the site
- the complications and intricacies associated with construction on a busy downtown location



**John Abruzzo**, a Vice President of Thornton Tomasetti, is a recognized leader in the field of Forensic Engineering. He holds degrees in civil engineering and is a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Pennsylvania. He has extensive experience working with a wide variety of materials and design types including high-rise and long-span steel structures. He possesses specialized knowledge in assessing and predicting the behavior of steel and reinforced concrete connections, structural stability, blast analysis, non-linear analysis, materials testing, data acquisition and testing of structural elements.

*Continued on Page 3*

*We, the People of the Philadelphia Section  
of the American Society of Civil Engineers,  
in Order to form a more perfect Section,*

*invite Thee to the*

*Annual Spring Social  
on the Tenth Day of May,  
in the Year of our Lord,  
Two Thousand and Seven  
at The National Constitution Center,  
525 Arch Street,  
in the City of Philadelphia  
of the Commonwealth of  
Pennsylvania.*

*The event will commence sharply at 6:00 PM  
with a cost of 60 dollars (United States currency)  
per person that shall include parking of ye conveyance.*

**Come. Partake.**

*Thou shalt consider bringing  
thy spouse (or significant other)  
to share in this festive occasion  
as we highlight the end of colonial America  
and the start of this great nation,  
these United States.*

*The evening will include a buffet dinner  
and a presentation on the formation of our  
Nation's Constitution.*

*If thou art planning to partake, please  
send thy cheque in the appropriate amount to our  
Post Office Box (one of those services that our  
pal, Ben Franklin, came up with) by April 30.*

**We hope to see thee there.**

## God Bless America!



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear ASCE Members and Friends,

**Greetings!** I hope you all are enjoying the warmer spring weather! This President's Message is my last one of the year. I wanted to let you know, that I absolutely LOVE being President and I am HONORED to serve you as President. ASCE is like a second home to me, and I look forward to continuing my involvement in ASCE after my Presidency of the Philadelphia Section.

Thank you to all of you for your help and support the past year. I also would like to thank my employer Urban Engineers, for its support during my Presidency. Your next President, **Jim Markham** of Pennoni Associates, is an outstanding leader and a great year will be in store! I think very highly of Jim both personally and professionally. I want to thank the wonderful ASCE Board — you are my friends and co-workers and the successes of the Philadelphia Section are because of all of you. Also, a special thanks to **Bob Wright**, our newsletter editor and General Good Guy, who has been my friend and mentor for over eleven years and has helped me a lot during my Presidency. THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU, OUR MEMBERS, AND TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS — we also would not be a success with you!

I thought it would be appropriate to review some highlights of the past year:

1. We started our year off with a **Board Retreat**, where **Ann Tomalavage** facilitated us in a session to see what goals we wanted for the year. We have plans of finishing up all of our goals by May. Some of them are included below, as a highlight of this year.
2. Our dedication of **City Hall** as a **National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark** was a great way to start our year, with our media and celebration event in May 2006. It was an awesome day, to celebrate an awesome building. It was a busy day of radio and television interviews, and it was an exciting day for our Section. Thanks especially to **Ruben David** for his energy and hard work on this.
3. Our list of speakers this year was just phenomenal.....from **Karen Rae**, Deputy Secretary for Local Transportation Projects at PennDOT in November, to **Rina Cutler**, Deputy Secretary for Administration for PennDOT in January, to **Allen Biehler**, Secretary of Transportation in March, we had a great year of wonderful speakers.
4. Website — We totally revamped our website to make it more updated and more in line with member needs. Check it out! [www.asce-philly.org](http://www.asce-philly.org) Many thanks to **Mark Tiger** for his great work.
5. E-mail — We used e-mail more than ever before this year for meeting reminders and **Kristen Bowman Kavanagh** is our ASCE Director behind the replies to you when you write to us at [info@asce-philly.org](mailto:info@asce-philly.org).
6. Fun Day with Students — This is the first year that we had a **Fun Scavenger Hunt** for college students. It was a great way for us to connect with the students. We had this event in the fall and hope to continue it in future years.
7. Details on our **Spring Social** are given on page 1. Our event this year will be at the **Constitution Center!** It is sure to be a great time! We have revamped our Spring Social based on comments from you, our members.
8. We instituted a message box for suggestions this year. It is [Suggestions@asce-philly.org](mailto:Suggestions@asce-philly.org).
9. We have a **Legislative Day** coming up on **May 8**, a day for us to go to Harrisburg and show why Civil Engineering is important and why infrastructure needs to be funded. Many thanks to **Chris Menna** for all of his work.
10. We are also having a mini-management seminar in April, for people who want to learn more about the administration of running of ASCE Sections. If you are interested in attending, please send me an e-mail at [ccmartsolf@urbanengineers.com](mailto:ccmartsolf@urbanengineers.com).
11. Your Section leadership attended Public Relations training, to help get more media attention on the great things that all of you are doing in the Section.
12. We embarked on the start of a **Five-Year Plan**. Thanks to **Jim Markham** for spearheading this effort.
13. The **ASCE Philadelphia Section Landmark Guide** will be unveiled at the **Spring Social** at the **Constitution Center** on **May 10, 2007**.
14. The Philadelphia Section Board started using an E-room this year, for a shared calendar and for posting important files of the Section.
15. We saved one of the best for last: our Younger Member Forum, under the leadership of **John Federico**, has continued its great success. The **YMF Winter Social** had almost 200 attendees - making it one of the most successful events of the entire Section! The Section is very proud of its **Younger Member Forum**.

Best of luck in the future to all of you and I hope to see you at future Section meetings! I hope to see you at our **Spring Social** on **May 10** at the Constitution Center!

Sincerely, Carol C. Martsolf, P.E., President — Philadelphia Section, ASCE

## ASCE, PHILADELPHIA SECTION OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTION — 2006-07 SEASON

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JULY 13, 2007

## TECHNICAL GROUPS/CHAIRS

Information on the ASCE, Philadelphia Section's Technical Groups is given below. Vice President **Mark Tiger** will coordinate activities of the Groups. If you have any topics that you think would be of interest to the Groups, please feel free to pass this information along to the Group Chair.

### CONSTRUCTION

Dennis MacBride  
SEPTA  
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215-580-3404

### DELAWARE VALLEY GEOINSTITUTE

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### ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT

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### ENVIRONMENTAL AND WATER RESOURCES

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### STRUCTURAL

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### TRANSPORTATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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## YOUNGER MEMBER FORUM NEWS

By Fred Vesce, Forum Editor

**John Federico**, Forum President 2006-07  
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### YMF Happenings

**Politics and Engineering — YMF Critical Issues Seminar** on Wednesday March 14, 2007, at the Elephant and Castle Pub

"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." —*Thomas Jefferson*

This was the quote that **Brian Pallasch** recited in his closing remarks to the seminar attendees. As you can probably imagine from the quote above, the central message from the panel to the 30-plus attendees during this year's annual **Critical Issues Seminar** was "get more involved, today!" The panel of experts assembled this year included:

- **Brian T. Pallasch, CAE** — ASCE National Director of Governmental Relations

- **Eric L. Flicker, P.E.** — Chief Financial Officer of Pennoni Associates Inc., Past National Chairman of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), and 2006 Delaware Valley Engineer of the Year

- **Spencer T. Finch, P.E.** — Director of Sustainable Development, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

- **Michael R. Boyer** — Manager of the Office of Long-Range Planning and Congestion Management, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Spencer Finch mentioned that, of the 435 members of Congress currently in office, less than 5 are Engineers, and none among them have made a major issue of getting funding for the rehabilitation of our nation's infrastructure. If we do not represent ourselves to our legislators, "we are letting others do surgery on our work."

The moderator of the event, **Dave Petrucci**, conducted the evening well and brought several poignant questions to the panel for consideration and discussion. These included information on

some good first steps in getting involved to promote public infrastructure funding issues, navigation around the current political process and system to get the desired results, and several others. Extended coverage of the seminar, including copies of the information packets that were distributed, is available on the YMF website: <http://www.ymfphilly.org>.

The YMF would like to thank the panelists for taking time to make our event so informative. A great job was done by our committee co-chairs **Dave Petrucci**, who arranged panelists and ably served as the evening's MC, and **Chris Schaeffer**, who coordinated the venue arrangement and other important details. Also thanks to **Frederick Vesce**, **Sharon Perez-Suarez**, and **John Federico** as the other members of the CIS committee for helping pull the event together.

### Upcoming events:

On **Wednesday, April 18, 2007**, the ASCE, Phila. Section and YMF will be hosting a construction tour of the **South Campus Research Facility**, which is a \$300 million new facility being built by the **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)** at the old Civic Center/Convention Hall site. This project features both the deepest mass excavation and the tallest concrete wall pours to date in our area. The tour will be held from 4PM to 6PM and will be followed by a Happy Hour at New Deck Tavern, 3408 Sansom Street, in University City. There is a 30-person limit on this tour, so please RSVP as soon as you can to: [RSVP@ymfphilly.org](mailto:RSVP@ymfphilly.org).

Also, the YMF will be hosting a free tour of the **Yards Brewery** on **Saturday, April 21, 2007**. The Brewery is located northeast of Center City Philadelphia, just minutes off I-95. The tour will begin at 1:15 PM and last for approximately half an hour. For those that are interested, the tour will be followed by a beer tasting and a speaker on "The Breweries of Brewerytown, Philadelphia." A happy hour at a local pub will follow. Please RSVP to: [RSVP.YARDS@ymfphilly.org](mailto:RSVP.YARDS@ymfphilly.org).

Please visit the YMF website at <http://www.ymfphilly.org/events.htm> for more details on each event, including flyers, directions, and information on how to RSVP.

## APRIL DINNER MEETING

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Mr. Abruzzo has investigated some of the most significant structural collapses in the United States including the collapses of L'Ambiance Plaza Condominiums, the Schoharie Creek Thruway Bridge and the Miller Park (Milwaukee Brewers' baseball stadium) crane collapse. In the aftermath of the events of September 11, he has been involved in numerous government and private sector projects involving the determination of blast loads, possible structure hardening schemes and progressive collapse studies for several high-rise and special-use buildings.



and residential developments, hotels, and hospitals. Her experience also includes providing technical expertise in solving complex construction problems related to structural design. Her specialty includes design and management of large, fast-track projects.

**Anjana Kadakia**, a Principal of Thornton Tomasetti, has 23 years of experience in design, in both structural steel and concrete. She has been responsible for managing major projects including high-rise buildings, office

Recently Ms. Kadakia has managed several high-profile projects including the Qwest Center in Omaha, Nebraska and the new Meadowlands Football Stadium in northern New Jersey. She received her Master of Science in Civil Engineering from Rutgers University in 1984. She is active in various professional organizations and is a published author of many books and professional papers.

**Resolve to attend ALL  
Section Meetings and  
Functions This Year!**

## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

### BRANIGAN RETIRES

ASCE, Philadelphia Section Past President **Tom Branigan** retired from the City of Philadelphia in March, after 38 years of service. (And he doesn't look that old — what, did he start working at age 6 or something??) Tom held several positions in our Section over the years, including Section President in 2000-01, and he was Treasurer for several years. Most recently, Tom was the e-mail coordinator for those of you who receive THE NEWS electronically. He dutifully got the latest edition in your e-mailboxes literally as it left the composing room.

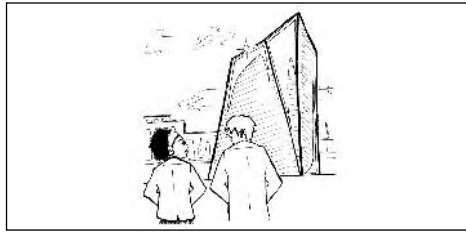
Tom most recently held the position of Transportation Engineering Manager in the Department of Streets' Engineering Division, where he headed the Transportation Engineering and Planning Section. He was the Assistant Manager of the Section since its inception in 1993. His career with the Department began in 1969 when, fresh out of high school, Tom followed in his dad's footsteps in the Department's Survey and Design Division and took a position as an entry-level survey corps aide. He worked his way up the ladder and into the "main office" of the Division, at which point he began his college education in the former Evening College at Drexel.

After "sticking it out" and getting his Engineering degree the hard way, while working and providing for his wife and two sons, Tom moved into an engineering spot in the Department's newly-created Highway Design Center in 1983. From there he advanced to the Manager level, at which he called it a career.

At his retirement luncheon last month, Tom made his new services available to any takers — he will gladly fill in at future golf outings for any consultant who is too busy to attend (something he called the "surrogate consultant"). We look forward to seeing Tom in this role!

We wish Tom well in his future endeavors and thank him for his many contributions to the Section's operations.

$E=mc^2$  (Engineers are mutually comical and cerebral!)



*Is Cira another word for crooked?*

## 2007 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

The **2007 Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Symposium** will be conducted on **October 17 and 18, 2007** at **Villanova University**. This marks the seventh such symposium conducted by Villanova.

The purpose of the symposium is to advance the knowledge and understanding of sustainable stormwater management for those dealing in all aspects of planning, design, construction, maintenance and operations, and regulatory compliance. A half-day workshop for non-engineers will be held preceding the symposium on October 16.

The symposium will begin with a keynote speaker addressing stormwater management issues in Pennsylvania. The remainder of the conference will include multiple sessions of papers presented by professionals in the area, panels discussing stormwater issues, and tours. New this year will be a poster session where design firms will be encouraged to present their projects to the symposium. Lunches will be provided both days and the proceedings will be published. An informal reception will be held at the end of the first day. CEU's will be given for attendance at the symposium.

Firms interested in sponsoring portions of the conference or interested in a display should contact **Dr. Robert Traver**, Director, Villanova Urban Stormwater Partnership, (610) 519-7899 or **Robert.Traver@villanova.edu**. For general information on the symposium, please visit the website, <http://www.villanova.edu/vusp/>.

## PAST PRESIDENT MENNA NOMINEE FOR GOVERNOR

by David Hanly

Don't we already have some guy named Rendell in this spot? Well, yes, but we're not talking about THAT Governor!

Our own **Christopher Menna**, ASCE, Phila. Section Past President, was recently selected as an official nominee for At-Large Governor of ASCE Region 2 by the Region 2 Nominating Committee. Look for Chris' name on the ballot when it comes out this summer and, as we do in Philadelphia, please be sure to vote early and often. If elected, Chris will serve a three-year term ending in 2010.

Region 2 was formed in 2005 during a governance shake-up of ASCE. Region 2. It includes all ASCE members in Pennsylvania (formerly District 4), Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia metropolitan area. All 10,000 ASCE members in Region 2 are the electorate for Governor positions.

There are six Region 2 Governors. All of the governors are truly At-Large; they represent all the members in the region. [This is different from other Region governance structures. For example, Region 1 has a Governor position that must be filled by a member from a small section like Mohawk Valley or Vermont.]

**David Hanly** is currently serving a two-year at-large governor term ending in October 2008. Dave was appointed to that position by the Region 2 Formation Team (R2FT.) It sounds a little suspicious, but Chris was on the R2FT and chaired the nominating committee for the appointments. (Is this the "payback," Dave? — Ed.)

Chris was nominated by our Section. The Region 2 nominating Committee received four nominations and chose to forward two official nominees to be placed on the ballot from the. Chris was one of the two selected as an official nominee. The other official nominee is **Kim Parker Brown** from the National Capitol Section.

Also, **Jeremy Colello** was elected as the Younger Member Representative to the Region 2 Board of Governors. He will have a non-voting position, alongside Chris and the other Governors.

The Philadelphia Section's representative on the Region 2 Nominating Committee was Section Board Member **Soheila Rahbari**.

## ASCE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DAY IN HARRISBURG

The four Pennsylvania Sections of ASCE (Central PA, Lehigh Valley, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia) released the **PA Infrastructure Report Card** in 2006. The report card alerted the public and our elected officials of a crisis in the condition of the Commonwealth's Infrastructure. In November 2006, the Governor's Transportation Funding and Reform Commission released a report that validated the Report Card's findings on the critical needs for Transit, Highways and Bridges.

We will be visiting our elected officials in Harrisburg on **Tuesday, May 8, 2007**, and we need your participation.

The day will consist of a kick-off session with speakers outlining our positions and how to have effective meetings with our elected officials. You will then have between one and

three meetings with elected officials to review the findings of the PA Infrastructure Report Card ([www.pareportcard.org](http://www.pareportcard.org)), express our support for the findings of the Governor's Transportation Funding Commission, and indicate your interest in providing your professional knowledge to support important policy decisions effecting the health, safety and welfare of Pennsylvanians

If you are interested in attending the ASCE Legislative Affairs Day in Harrisburg, please contact **Chris Menna**, our Infrastructure Report Card Chair at [christopher.menna@phila.gov](mailto:christopher.menna@phila.gov), or (215) 686-5183. If Civil Engineers don't tell our elected officials about the importance of our infrastructure, who will? We encourage you to ask your employer to support you in this important event.

## WE DID IT AGAIN!!

We promised no more boo-boos. And, as in most things, we tried to follow through on this commitment. Since your Editor is a male and we all know about males and commitment, so it's little surprise that this promise couldn't be kept. (Memo to self — no more promises...!)

ASCE, Phila. Section Member **Thom May** was kind enough to bring another 'oops' to our attention. It seems we've put the punctuation marks on the wrong side of parentheses and quotation marks here and there. To make matters worse, we committed this sin in the "Oops" column in February!

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## THE MARTSOLF PRESIDENCY

### Or, How to Burn the Candle at Both Ends, and in the Middle, Without Getting Burned

It must be the end of another season. The days are getting longer, the trees are budding, the birds are singing, and we want to venture outside again. While we were saying the same thing for much of January (and regretting it for most of February), spring seems to have officially arrived. And, in the Philadelphia Section, we know when spring arrives, the Section's season is about to end. As they say in the military, mission accomplished.

We close our 94th year of existence with our 94th Section President, Carol C. Martsolf, leading the way. The season was a success and Carol, as President, can claim it was all because of her. If you know Carol, however, she will attribute the credit to everyone else and take none herself. This is the way Carol happens to be.

Your Editor is obligated by tradition to take this opportunity to present a "year in review" and say nice things about the outgoing President. When the President is one Carol Martsolf, this job becomes way too easy. As "Home on the Range" explains it, "...where seldom is heard a discouraging word..." the "range" could be the Section under Carol's stewardship. Carol tends to be a very quiet leader, but you know she's there. She's always ready to step in and do good, and that's something we desperately need in a leader these days. But many of you probably don't know much about Carol, mainly because, as mentioned, Carol is a machine that runs very quietly.

To make this easier to read, and to prove to those of you who think that we at THE NEWS get paid by the word, your Editor will use the first person singular the rest of the way in this article. (Hey, I gotta type this too!)

The subtitle of this piece is there because, even though I consider Carol to be a good friend, I often wonder (as possibly many of you do) how she does it. Carol's list of things she does is huge. This year, she took on the Presidency of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), while serving as President of our own Section. Now, don't get lulled into thinking that's twice the perks, twice the Secret Service protection, etc., because, as nice as the Presidency of a group like this is, there aren't all that many perks. Very often, there are lots of additional duties, but "perks" is not a word that flows freely here. Right off the bat, there is no salary, and the hours can be lengthy. Dedication is key, and Carol is truly dedicated to these groups.

You've seen the many community-related causes and associations for which Carol volunteers. To save space, we won't list them here, but there's a lot — take our word for it! And, you must keep in mind, this is all in addition to Carol's being a full-time single parent for her 11-year-old daughter Catherine, and holding full-time employment. (Maybe Carol will let us in on her secret — is it 30-hour days, 8-day weeks, what?)

Other than the physical constraints of time and space, it's little wonder that Carol has had

success with the Presidency of our Section. I could resort to some big words to describe her, but I'll save all of us a trip to the dictionary and keep it simple. She is dedicated, diligent and driven, and that sums it up.

I first met Carol shortly after she started working in the "real world," in 1995 or so, when she was brought into a project meeting by a colleague and former co-worker of mine. My memory was a little better then than it is now, so I actually remembered Carol when I next saw her at a Section meeting, and after a chat, the friendship began. I had also just finished my year as Section President and was settling into the quiet, sedentary routine that most Past Presidents manage to find (one that obviously didn't last very long?). Carol, apparently looking for ideas and not experienced enough to know better than to ask me, began to tap my "knowledge" for various Younger Member Forum functions, Section committees, and whatever. (And those of you who know me know I can't keep my hand down when someone asks for a show of hands for volunteers for some task or another...).

Carol started her "rise through the ranks", taking various positions at the YMF and then gravitating to the Section Board, and eventually the President's spot. Along the way, she managed to get involved in just about any committee that was looking for help. Many of us welcomed her help and put her to work on our various groups and committees, where she always took an active role. Several years ago, she volunteered to help me with the Section Awards program, and she has become a fixture there as she helps in just about any way possible. (And, so far, every year we've done the awards narration taping, we walk away from the session after we've finished it, at 10 PM or so, and Carol beams with excitement and accomplishment, and remarks that she's already looking forward to the next recording, a mere 365 days or so away!)

Once we all realized how much she was doing, we were amazed. Since Carol tends to be quiet, it wasn't always obvious that she was doing this and that, but it was clear that it was getting done mainly because of her. And, then, she started to amass awards and recognition for her various contributions — again, being very modest, this was not easy for her to accept — but she did. The Delaware Valley Young Engineer of the Year, the Section's Young Engineer Award, the ASCE National Edmund Friedman Award, and many others could grace her cubicle, if she decided to hang them there, but she modestly keeps them out of view.

With all these things to do, as if it all weren't enough, she trained for and ran in the Philadelphia Marathon last November and intends to run in future races. The level of energy and time Carol has is hard to imagine. And, of course, she works for a living, as a Project Engineer at Urban Engineers, where she often puts in long days and can be found in the office

on weekends. You start to wonder about those previously-mentioned 30-hour days...?

Now, Carol comes along and does well, and the reward is "pasture," as she joins the ranks of Past Presidents. Again, whether she'll do well in pasture mode is up for discussion. From my standpoint, I'm betting that the pasture won't see her very much.

Which leads one to believe, what will Carol do with all that free time once her Presidency of the Section is done? We hope she'll slow down a little, take a breath, and enjoy it. We suspect this won't happen. Carol even mentioned to me not too long ago that she enjoyed the presidency so much she'd like to do it for another year. But we'll let her off the hook after one term.

And now, hats off to Carol Martsolf! We all appreciate your motivation, leadership, dedication and inspiration. You've left a tough pair of shoes to fill. Which falls into the lap of...

**Jim Markham**, who, as the new season begins, we welcome into the President's seat. Jim is about to become a new dad, so he'll get to preside over a real infant and a collection of grown ones (but I kid the Board!). Since Jim is also a good friend, I look forward to another year of not having to pay full attention to what's going on (one of the things I do best — and if you read this publication carefully, you'll certainly agree!), and this article can once again write itself for publication a year from now. Jim, you needn't be too concerned, since your "helpers" are at the ready to assist you with keeping the well-oiled machine that's the Philadelphia Section going. Whether you'll get them lined up behind the Red Sox, well, that's one of your first and probably toughest tasks.

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## AND NOW, A WORD FOR OUR SPONSORS !

As you have seen, the ASCE, Phila. Section Sponsorship Program was a big hit once again this season. We have 39 sponsors to thank for this (a record number!) — so successful that we've "outgrown" the Sponsors' Pages and have had to appropriate part of page 6 of recent editions of THE NEWS to get all the cards in. As always, the Section extends its collective "thank you" to our sponsors for their commitment and continued support of the Section.

We will be contacting current participants later this summer to "re-up" folks for the 2007-08 season. We hope the program will be as successful then as well. THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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**Remember in elementary school,  
you were told that in case of fire  
you have to line up quietly in a  
single file line from  
smallest to tallest?**

**What is the logic in that?**

**What, do tall people burn slower?**

— Warren Hutcherson

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## MARCH JOINT DINNER MEETING

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Downtown Club, Center City Philadelphia

### The Status of Pennsylvania's Transportation Program

by Bob Wright, Editor

Even with a last-minute change in speaker, venue, date and topic, something that happened so quickly that even THE NEWS wasn't able to catch it, nearly 200 people turned out for a chance to hear the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation, **Allen Biehler**, present information on the State's transportation plans for the future. The occasion was the annual joint meeting among the Mid-Atlantic Section, Institute of Transportation Engineers (MASITE), the Philadelphia Chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), the Engineers' Club of Philadelphia (ECP), and our Section.

**ASCE, Phila. Section President Carol Martsoff** opened the meeting with a few announcements, and then switched hats to become **WTS Philadelphia Chapter President Martsoff** for several other updates. **Younger Member Forum President John Federico** brought everyone up to speed on the Forum's planned events. **ECP President** (and Past ASCE, Phila. Section President) **Ruben David** offered information on coming Club meetings. **MASITE President Jeannette Quiris** provided some insight into what MASITE has planned for the next few months.

With all the various technical society Presidents out of the way, President Martsoff welcomed newly-installed **PennDOT District 6 Executive Lester Toaso** to the podium for some words of wisdom, which concluded with his bringing his predecessor, **Deputy Secretary of Transportation Rina Cutler**, to the dais. She reminded those present that March is **Women's History Month** and proceeded to cite some obviously-dated pointers given to employers hiring women in the transportation industry in 1943. (No, we will NOT print these for your amusement or horror, but we will remind you that things were a bit different in our world 60-plus years ago!)

Deputy Secretary Cutler introduced Secretary Biehler for the evening's main presentation. The Secretary opened his segment with some background on how he was selected for the position and the many interesting situations he must face in the direction of an over-12,000 employee organization. He noted that the Department has had more than its fair share of bad press recently, but this only represents the very challenging and often thankless task that it faces in its daily duties in the provision of mobility for the residents of the State.

Funding is a significant issue in the operation of the Department, and Secretary Biehler highlighted the many problems that must be faced in this regard. The report was issued last November by the Transportation Funding Reform Commission. As the Section was advised at both our November and January meetings this season, funding is at a critical "crossroads" as

construction costs continue to rise and outstrip other inflation and price indexes, and needs continue to grow both in the preservation of existing systems as well as the necessary expansion to serve growing areas. The Commission noted that almost \$1 billion is needed to cover anticipated needs and costs in highways and mass transit, and a host of various options for revenue enhancement and growth have been suggested. The Secretary noted that the General Assembly must take some long, hard looks at this to make key decisions on how this funding will be provided. As we know, the General Assembly has had some radical changes of its own following last November's elections.

Secretary Biehler reiterated that the solutions are certainly neither easy nor painless. One major source of new highway revenue is an increased gas tax, however Pennsylvania's tax is already among the higher rates in the nation, and the recommended 12.5 cent increase would result in the State rising to the top of this list. Governor Rendell would prefer to ease the burden on citizens, thus other possibilities include increased taxes on oil company profits and higher driver's license and vehicle registration fees. The last-mentioned fees are on the low side compared to other states.

One of the "hot topics" in the news lately is the privatization/lease of the Pennsylvania Turnpike to private investors for a 30-year term. Secretary Biehler explained that nearly 50 firms have expressed interest in this proposal, which could raise at least \$900 million a year for PennDOT and

\$65 million a year for municipal governments to use for local streets and bridges. This could also involve the imposition of tolls on other Interstate Highways around the State, in particular I-79, I-80, I-81 and I-95. Obviously this has its own controversy associated with it.

Public transit agencies around the State, already without a dedicated source of funding, probably have few options other than a combination of cost reductions and fare increases. Secretary Biehler noted that this has a significant impact on working people (statewide, over 60% of transit trips are people traveling to and from work) and the mobility of those who cannot or do not drive. In the latter category, senior citizens and urban poor are heavily represented. Governor Rendell has advised transit operators to develop two budgets for the coming fiscal year, to reflect scenarios in which State funding will be either reduced or completely eliminated. Secretary Biehler added that, locally, SEPTA has already begun to publicize a two-alternative budget for public review and input.

After several poignant questions from the attendees were ably covered by Secretary Biehler, Section President Martsoff thanked him and all present from ASCE, WTS, ECP and MASITE, and presented him with tokens of each group's appreciation for his appearance on very short notice.

## WE DID IT AGAIN!

Continued from Page 4

Suffice it to say that your Editor promises to dust off the old grammar books during THE NEWS' summer hiatus so we can start off next year without any more apology columns. We could use the space for more useful pieces (eg, a cartoon).



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