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#### PHILADELPHIA SECTION AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

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Vol. 76-1

# Our 90th Year

October, 2003

#### OCTOBER JOINT DINNER MEETING

Philadelphia Section, American Society of Civil Engineers and the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA)

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2003

THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA • 140 South Broad Street • Philadelphia, PA 19102 Cocktails – 5:30 p.m. • Dinner – 6:30 p.m. • Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: The "Frankford Swing"

SPEAKERS: Cynthia Brey, Thomas Nuxoll and Kevin O'Brien, SEPTA

RESERVATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2003. Please send your check for the number of attendees @ \$30.00 per member or guest, \$15.00 per ASCE Student Members, payable to the Phila. Section, ASCE, P.O. Box 58186, Phila., PA 19102-8186; or call the Electronic Message Center: 1-800-461-4190 (Open 24 hours/day) or c-mail the Section at info@asce-philly.org.

**SPECIAL FEATURE:** UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA NIGHT – The ASCE Student Chapter, Faculty and Alumni of the Electrical and Systems Engineering of the University of Pennsylvania will be honored at this meeting. All Students, Faculty and Alumni are cordially invited.

SEPTA is currently completing a \$150 million complete reconstruction of its Frankford Terminal in Northeast Philadelphia. The project has been underway since 1998 and is scheduled for completion later this year. The Terminal serves as the northeastern endpoint of the Market-Frankford Line (known locally as the "El") where almost 100,000 passengers transfer daily among 15 bus routes and the El. The Terminal, originally built in 1922, and the adjacent SEPTA Frankford Depot, have been radically reconfigured to ease the bus/El interface for passengers.

A critical part of the project was the relocation of the last 800 feet of the El structure from above Frankford Avenue to a new location within the new Terminal complex. This was accomplished in July during a nine-day period called the "Frankford Swing". The El service was truncated at the Margaret-Orthodox Station for the duration and bus routes were rerouted to allow riders to continue to reach their destinations while construction occurred. The entire project has required massive public relations efforts to keep riders advised of new bus loading/unloading locations, detours, and other effects on service.

The presentation team will give insight on the many details of the work and how it was accomplished efficiently within restrictive time and physical constraints.

#### **NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING**

co-sponsored by the Philadelphia Section, American Society of Civil Engineers and the Younger Member Forum

## **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2003**

THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA • 140 South Broad Street • Philadelphia, PA 19102

Cocktails – 5:30 p.m. • Dinner – 6:30 p.m. • Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: The Quecreek Mine Disaster

More detail will follow in next month's edition.

RESERVATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2003. Please send your check for the number of attendees @ \$30.00 per member or guest, \$15.00 per ASCE Student Members, payable to the Phila. Section, ASCE, P.O. Box 58186, Phila., PA 19102-8186; or call the Electronic Message Center: 1-800-461-4190 (Open 24 hours/day) or e-mail the Section at info@asce-philly.org.

# SIDNEY ROBIN 1917-2003 A PHILA. SECTION ICON

Sid Robin was born and raised in North Philadelphia. He graduated from Northeast High School (since renamed Edison High School and now Edison-Fariera High School) in 1934. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Drexel Institute of Technology (now Drexel University) in 1940.

During World War II, Sid served with the Army Corps of Engineers as a civilian consultant on Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) projects. After the war, Sid worked with his father, Philip, as a builder specializing in the rehabilitation of distressed residential and commercial projects. This evolved into his own company, Zenith Land Development, in which he remained active up until the time of his passing.

One of Sid's many highlights was the completion of the Hollywood development in Rockledge, Montgomery County. Sid and his father took a failed undertaking and advanced the ideas of flat-roofed pastel, stucco houses surrounded by lawns sprinkled with tropical plants, on streets with names evoking the towns and cities of Southern California. When the original builders left behind a myriad of problems, the Robin team moved and changed things from what Sid described as a "scar on the community" to a thriving neighborhood.

In 1955, Sid married Elizabeth Goldman. He and Betty settled in Logan. In the mid-1970's, they moved to the "country," their new home in Richboro.

Sid began playing the violin at age 8 and his passion for music continued throughout his life. He played in over 10 orchestras.

Sid was active in the Democratic Party and served as a ward committeeman both in Logan and in Bucks County.

Sadly, Sid passed away suddenly on August 16 at Abington Memorial Hospital. The cause of death was cardiac arrhythmia. He is survived by his nieces, Betsy Lichtenstein Cohn and Joann Soloff Breuer, and his partner of four years, Carolyn Hitchcock.

Memorial donations may be made in Sid's memory to the BuxMont Unitarian Universalism Fellowship, 2040 Street Road, Warrington, PA 18976.



#### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear ASCE Friends,

Welcome to the Philadelphia Section's 90th Year! We kicked off this new business year at our annual Spring Social on May 2, 2003. As usual, this event was well attended by our members and their families. We recognized our various award winners including our Civil Engineer of the Year; Michael Griffin, as well as installed our Section Board members for this new year. In celebration of

our 90th anniversary, we introduced our commemorative program booklet which featured Civil Engineering landmarks in and around the Philadelphia area. We received many positive comments on the program and our thanks goes out to Kathleen Durham for all of her hard work and historical research

Over the summer, we were able to partner with the City of Philadelphia's Division of Aviation to install a photo exhibit highlighting many of the significant projects featured in our 90th Anniversary program. It is located in the Commuter Terminal 'F' at the Philadelphia International Airport and will run through November 2003. Activities such as this help us to further our goal of increasing public awareness about who we are and what we do as Civil Engineers. Our 90th Anniversary program will also serve as a foundation for a Philadelphia Civil Engineering Landmarks Guidebook we will produce over the next year.

Another important event that occurred over the summer was the 16th Annual National Concrete Canoe Competition which was hosted by Drexel University and the Philadelphia Section of ASCE on June 20-22, 2003. Engineering students from 24 universities across the country who won their regional competitions converged on Philadelphia for the chance to become the National Champion. There was significant media coverage of this event to further increase our exposure to the public. Drexel University and its ASCE Student Chapter did a fabulous job of promoting and organizing this competition. They are to be commended along with the many other volunteers who gave of their time to make this event such a success.

Our Board has been busy over the summer as well. We have been lining up our calendar of events for the coming year and are excited about our topics and speakers. We are looking forward to taking part in Joint Meetings with some of our fellow organizations and continuing our public outreach efforts. We encourage you to get involved and participate in the activities that promote our profession and help shape the future of Civil Engineering in our community and our country.

Unfortunately though, our new year has already been marred by two recent losses to our board. Sid Robin, who has served as Editor of this newsletter for the past 62 years, passed away on August 16, 2003 at the young age of 86. And just recently, our Vice President. Walt DeLury, lost his courageous four year battle with cancer on September 27, 2003. Both of these men were true engineers. They cared about our profession and gave of themselves to our Section and their communities. They will be deeply missed.

> Sincerely. Allan F. Moore, Jr., P.E. President - Philadelphia Section, ASCE



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#### SECTION WEB SITE!

Our Section's web site has taken on a new look! Check us out at www.asce-philly.org. Make sure you bookmark this site to check on our latest meetings and events, links and much more! Comments and/or suggestions? Please contact us either via our Electronic Message Hotline at 1-800-461-4190 (24 hours a day) or e-mail at info@asce-philly.org.

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COPY DEADLINE FOR **NOVEMBER 2003 ISSUE OCTOBER 17, 2003** 

Editorial

# THE LEGEND THAT IS SIDNEY ROBIN

by Bob Wright, Interim Editor, THE NEWS



The Section lost an icon this past summer. **Sid Robin**, the Editor of THE NEWS since 1941, passed away suddenly on August 16, 2003.

For those of you who knew Sid, you knew he was larger than life in many ways. Sid, who was 86, moved with the tenacity and aplomb of someone half his age (this author knows this all too well, being close to half Sid's age, but nowhere near as 'on the ball' as Sid always was). Sid took on the duties of Editor in 1941, when the world had just started climbing out of a devastating depression, when war was underway both in western Europe and the Far East (and was soon about to involve the United States), when the Philadelphia wage tax, a temporary measure (!) had only been in effect for a year, and when many of us had not even been born.

He steered the ship that was THE NEWS for another twenty years. In 1962, Sid became the President of the Philadelphia Section, and reluctantly handed over the editor's duties for the duration of his presidency. In 1963, when Sid's term as President ended, he quickly snatched the Editor's chair back, and has been sitting there ever since.

This author first met Sid in 1981, and quickly found out how feisty the "old guy" could be. Around that time, Tom Lauer, who some of you may remember, became the Membership Secretary for the Section. Among his first duties was the sending of a letter to those whose annual dues were in arrears. Tom dutifully sent the letter to about 60 people. One of them sent back an angry reply directing the "young whippersnapper" Tom to check the rolls, since the author of the letter was in fact a Life Member of ASCE and therefore did not have to pay dues any more. Of course, the letter came from Sid, who kiddingly reminded poor Tom of his misstep several times during that year. (A few years later, Tom moved to Oregon. We don't think the move was related to Sid's reaction, but...)

Many of you remember Section meetings at the Engineers' Club. In the main meeting room, there was a piano off to one side. For some reason, Sid always made it a point to sit at the piano during the meetings. He did not, for some reason, generally partake of the meals at the Club. (It may have had something to do with the quality of the food?!) But anyone could easily mistake Sid for the evening's musical entertainment, and several

times a few folks did. (This author often would remind Sid that he would get more tips if he put a tip jar on the piano, and this would usually elicit a comment or two back from Sid.) Musically, Sid was an accomplished violinist, something many of you probably did not know.

When the "break" from the Engineers' Club finally came, the Section became a nomad of sorts, trying several different venues before finally settling into a home at Williamson's on City Avenue. That was a victory for Sid as well, as he could finally sit and eat with his fellow members. (This author recalls at least once at Williamson's when a piano was, for some reason, left in the meeting room, and Sid was told that someone finally got his old seat back.)

This author's presidency was an interesting one. As I have told many folks many times, one of my goals (perhaps my only goal) was to have Sid remain as Editor during my term. He was too valuable to lose. Of course, this came before the 8AM Saturday calls usually starting off with "Bob, buddy, how are you doin'? Listen, I need....", usually followed by the 9PM Sunday calls. When Sid called, you didn't need caller ID or anything fancy like that – as soon as you finished saying "Hello", you knew it was him on the other end.

We are all too aware of the massive changes in technology over the past twenty years. The world brought the fax machine. Not to Sid. Personal computers came along. Not to Sid. Sid's method was his trusty Underwood typewriter and his blue pencil. It might not have been modern and flashy, but it worked. THE NEWS was a work of pride for Sid, and he strongly reacted to anyone who dared find a mistake or typo in it. Of course, with Sid's keen editorial eyes, there were few mistakes. (Please don't expect this level of perfection from the "new regime"!) Sid didn't need spell check. A running joke at Section Board meetings was that e-mails would be sent on particular topics for review, but someone would have to mail a hard copy to Sid.

Many of you who attend Section meetings with any regularity know that Sid always asked at least one question of every meeting speaker. This streak came to a halt for some reason at one of last year's meetings, but it started right up again at the next meeting. At last April's meeting, when the presentation ended, this author made a quick dash to the men's room. On the way back to the meeting room, I passed Sid who was heading to the men's room. I reminded him that he needed to get back in there and ask his question. He returned after a few minutes, with his hand in the air while walking into the room, waiting to get called on with his question.

Sid would always ask this author to provide a synopsis of the meeting for THE NEWS. I generally did not take detailed notes, and often I relied partly on what I knew about the topic and partly on memory. Sid would usually either come to me after the meeting or call the next day wondering why I wasn't taking notes when he looked my way during the meeting. Once the story was shipped to Sid for editing, he would again call to wonder how I did it when he clearly saw me not taking notes.

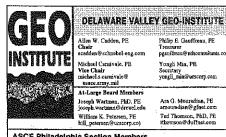
A couple of years ago, the Section put together a tribute to Sid for his many years of service. Several speakers gave him lofty praise. This author presented last and gave what I called the "truth" about Sid, taking the opportunity to throw a couple of humorous jabs his way. Sid rebuted that, of all the speakers, somehow he knew I was going to do what I did. Go figure.

This author has volunteered to try and fill the big shoes left by Sid. While I can only attempt to do my best, I ask for two things. One, please be patient with me — I'm the new guy. Two, I won't even try to challenge Sid's 61-year record as Editor. I think it will (and should) stand for a long time. Besides, as tempting as it sounds, I'd have to live to the ripe old age of 107 to do it. I honestly don't think I can do this job past my 105th birthday.

We think the ultimate tribute to Sid is to allow our membership to remember him in the pages of his "domain", THE NEWS. To do this, we invite you to send in your favorite Sid story. You can send it to our post office box or to the Section website. We'll print as many as we can in an upcoming issue. We think this would be the best way to highlight the many and various contributions of Sid Robin to the Philadelphia Section.

A memorial service for Sid will be conducted on Monday, October 20, 2003, starting at 2 PM, at the BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2040 Street Road, Warrington. All are invited to attend and participate.





ASCE Philadelphia Section Members

Are you interested in receiving the DVGI monthly newsletter? Add your name to our email list by sending your email address to Mr. Yongli Min, PE @ yongli\_min@urscorp.com and you will begin receiving our newsletter!

#### THE 2003 SPRING SOCIAL

The Section's Annual Spring Social and Dinner Dance was conducted on Friday, May 2, 2003 at the Sugarloaf Conference Center in Chestnut Hill. Nearly 140 Section members, spouses and guests were in attendance as the Section kicked off its 90th year of service.

The event included the traditional induction of new Officers and Board Members. Former ASCE District 4 Director and Section Past President Joe Syrnick presented the oath of office to the new officers as well as those completing the second years of their terms.

Outgoing Section President Ruben David gave an overview of his successful year, using both a slide show as well as his address. He thanked the Section Board and officers for their support and assistance, and offered roses to those who contributed their time during his tenure as President.

A handsome commemorative program booklet was assembled for the Social. In addition to the events of the evening, the program chronicled a number of notable local projects in honor of the 90th anniversary of the Section.

The Section's top awardees in the Delaware Valley Science Fair were invited to attend the Social and display their winning projects. Both were able to attend, and special recognition was given to them — Jeremiah Godfrey, who attends the Towle Institute (Grades 6-8 winner) and Daina Andries, a student at the Academy of Notre Dame de Namur (Grades 9-12 winner).

The Section Awards for 2003 were also a highlight of the evening. This year, six Section Award recipients were cited, mainly through the audiovisual show that has become a Section standard. Information on each of the awardees follows.

#### Philadelphia Civil Engineer of the Year

This year, the recipient of the Section's highest honor is Michael V. Griffin, a Senior Vice President of Hill International. Mike has managed Hill's Center City office for the past two years. He has been with Hill, a multidisciplinary consulting firm, since 1981. He has directed several significant efforts for the firm, including the widening of the New Jersey Turnpike between Newark and Woodbridge and the conversion of the Battleship New Jersey into a floating museum on the Camden waterfront, along with its pier and visitors center. His current concentration is the direction of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative Program for the City of Philadelphia. Mike began his career with the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Property and assisted in the handling of several large projects, including the Chestnut Street Transitway and the portion of the Center City Commuter Rail Connection between Suburban Station and the new Market East Station.

Mike received his Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from Villanova University in 1974, with a subsequent Masters degree from Villanova in 1979. He later obtained an MBA from LaSalle College in 1989. He is an active member of sev-

eral technical societies in addition to ASCE and is a certified mediator by the American Arbitration Association. Mike, his wife Nancy, and their three daughters live in Southampton.

#### Philadelphia Young Civil Engineer of the Year

Christopher Wright, a Senior Civil Engineer at the Center City office of DMJM + Harris, is the awardee this year. Chris has held this position at DMJM + Harris for the past four years. His assignments have covered a varied area of roadway design, railroad clearance improvements, utility coordination, stormwater management, and related activities. He has been a part of several locally-significant projects such the CSX Railroad Trenton Line clearance improvement, the Walt Whitman Bridge rehabilitation, the Delaware River Aerial Tram construction, the replacement of the Market Street Elevated, and intermodal rail facilities at the Naval Business Center.

Before his engagement at DMJM + Harris, Chris worked for Black and Veatch as a Project Engineer for eight years. He received his Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from Villanova University in 1991 and is currently pursuing his Masters degree at Drexel University. He is a member of the Society of American Military Engineers and the American Society of Highway Engineers in addition to ASCE. He has served the Section in various capacities and is a past president of the Section's Younger Member Forum. He is a newly-appointed member of the Section's Board of Directors.

Chris, his wife Lisa, and their infant daughter, Sophie Elisabeth, live in Erdenheim.

#### Geotechnical Engineer of the Year

Michael J. Byle is the recipient of this award. Mike is a Geotechnical Project Manager for Gannett Fleming at the firm's Valley Forge office. In this capacity, he conducts geotechnical and groundwater studies and investigations, and is involved with the design, construction management, inspection, and material testing for geotechnical efforts. He has been with Gannett since 1994, following fifteen years of varied responsibilities at other firms. He is the author of numerous publications on infiltration, seismic testing, ground modification techniques, and expansive soils. He has a nationally-renowned knowledge of grouting and karst applications. Among the many projects on which he has worked are local efforts at the Amtrak railroad yard in Harrisburg, the Cherry Island Landfill in Wilmington, and site preparation at the Vanguard headquarters in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County.

Mike earned his Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Michigan in 1978, and received a Masters degree with a geotechnical specialization from Michigan in 1981. He is active in the ASCE Geo-Institute at both the national and local levels, and served as President of the Section's Delaware Valley Geo-Institute in 2000-01. He was elected to the Fellow level of membership in ASCE in 1999. Mike, his wife Sharon, and their three children live in Downingtown.

#### Construction Engineer of the Year

Timothy A. Kruppenbacher, a Vice President at DMJM Aviation in Center City, is the recipient of this award. Tim has been with the firm and its predecessor, D & Z Infrastructure, for the past fifteen years, and has held the position of Vice President since 1996. He is primarily concerned with the management and direction of airfield and airport construction and reconstruction projects. In addition to significant projects at the Philadelphia International Airport, including the \$500 million terminal expansion program and the \$220 million runway and airfield expansions, he has directed similar large-scale projects in Atlanta, Boston and Colorado Springs.

Tim received his Bachelors degree in Engineering from the State University of New York in 1982, followed by a Masters in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado in 1984. He is a member of the Society of American Military Engineers in addition to ASCE. His projects have received national and industry recognition with various awards. Tim, his wife Laurie, and their five children live in Pottstown.

#### Structural Engineer of the Year

This year's honoree is Catherine Chia-Calabria, the Manager of the Structures Group at the Center City office of McCormick Taylor and Associates. She has held this position for the past two years, after serving as a Senior Structural Engineer at the firm for five years. As the group manager, she oversees the design of steel and prestressed concrete highway bridges, culverts, retaining walls, noise mitigation walls, and sign structures, and the preparation of construction documents, specifications and estimates for these elements. She also directs activities for structural retrofitting and upgrading after determination of load capacity ratings and performance of seismic analyses. Locally, she has been involved in projects on US 202, the Route 42 Freeway, and the Trenton-Morrisville Bridge across the Delaware River.

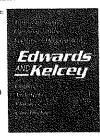
Catherine received her Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from Drexel University in 1984, followed by a Masters from Drexel in 1987. In addition to ASCE, she is a member of the American Society of Highway Engineers, the American Institute of Steel Construction, and Women's Transportation Seminar. She has had a particular focus on the introduction of young girls to engineering and has volunteered in several local schools in this endeavor. Catherine, her husband Craig, and their three daughters live in Yardley. (Continued on Page 5)

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#### Spring Social

(Continued from Page 4)

Young Government Engineer of the Year

John Schuler is the recipient of this honor. John is a Bridge Quality Assurance Engineer with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in its Central Office in Harrisburg, and has held this position for the past two years. His duties include the review and approval of bridge structure type, size and location reports, foundation plans, bridge plans and pile hammer submissions. He is also involved with the verification of load and resistance factor design computer programs for bridges as well as pipe and retaining wall design. Before his tenure at PennDOT, John held positions in three firms as well as the Army Corps of Engineers.

John obtained his Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from Lehigh University in 1989, with a subsequent Masters degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1997. He is an active member of the Society of American Military Engineers as well as ASCE. He is the current Vice President of the Reading Branch. In 1998, John was the winner of the Daniel W. Mead Prize for Younger Members.

John, his wife Kelly, and son Alexander live in Reading.

#### Scholarships

The Section Scholarship program provides scholarships to incoming juniors and seniors in the Student Chapters of the Section's six colleges. This year's recipients were **Kwahena Addo-Boateng**, a sophomore at Temple University; **Renee Robert**, a sophomore at Widener University; and **Allison Schultz**, a junior at the University of Pennsylvania.

#### Special Award

Kathy Keiper of DeskTop Associates, the assembler/copysetter of THE NEWS, belatedly accepted a Special Award to cite her service to the Section. Kathy was nominated for the award last year but was unable to attend the 2002 Social to accept it, as she had a previous commitment. She was invited back to attend this year and receive her award. Kathy works closely with Editor Sid Robin in the production of each issue and serves as his computer wizard, e-mail/fax coordinator, and unofficial assistant.

Special thanks are extended to those who helped make the Awards Program a success once again this year. This includes the following:

- Event sponsors HNTB Corporation (Gold sponsor), DMJM + Harris (Silver sponsor), Hill International (Bronze sponsor).
- Program booklet committee Tom Branigan, Ruben David, Sandra May, Carol Martsolf, Chris Menna, Allan Moore, Chris Rood and Bob Wright. Special thanks is extended to Kathleen Durham of the Philadelphia Department of Streets, the primary author, researcher and coordinator of the project historical information capsules.
- Awards audio narrators (who once again gave up a nice spring evening to donate their voices to the effort!) - Ruben David, Carol

(Continued on Page 6)

#### YOUNGER MEMBER FORUM NEWS

by Michael McAtee, PE 2002-03 YMF Vice President

Michael J. McAtee, PE
2003-2004 President
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mjmcatee@urbanengineers.com

The Younger Member Forum (YMF) membership includes college students, recent graduates and young engineers, including Registered Professional Engineers, who are 35 years of age or younger. The objectives of the group are: 1) to provide networking opportunities, 2) to interact with schools and the general public to promote civil engineering and 3) to enhance career development.

Young engineers or college students who would like to become part of the YMF and be added to the announcement list should contact James Markham of Pennoni Associates, at secretary@ymfphilly.com or at (215) 222-3000. There are no fees to join!

#### Recent Accomplishments

On June 7, 2003, sixteen Younger Member Forum volunteers braved torrential rain to assist Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia in building a two-story home in an impoverished neighborhood of West Philadelphia. Surrounded by vacant and deteriorating houses, the new Habitat home will stand out as a sign of progress and determination. After erecting scaffolding that that was needed to install exterior siding, the volunteers broke up into groups and dispersed throughout the house. One group worked on cutting, notching and painting the siding. Another two crews climbed the scaffolding and began installing the siding. Incredibly, the siding crews continued their work with little reduction in efficiency, even as rain poured off the gutterless roof directly onto the volunteers. The final group was able to stay dry as they worked inside painting interior window frames. Thanks to John Federico of Urban Engineers for organizing this successful volunteer event!

On August 15, 2003, the YMF held its 3rd Annual Minor League Baseball Outing at Campbell's Field, the home of the Camden Riversharks. The stadium once again offered great food, entertainment and of course, great baseball. The thirty people who attended the game, including YMF and ASCE members, friends, and spouses, were able to take in the dramatic view of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and the Philadelphia skyline as they watched the Riversharks fall to Mitch Williams' Atlantic City Surf 6-4. Afterwards, the group enjoyed a spectacular fireworks show over the Delaware River. Special thanks to Joe Platt of Traffic Planning and Design for coordinating this event.

On September 17, 2003, the YMF hosted a behind-the-scenes tour of the Kimmel Center on the Avenue of the Arts. The attendees were given an opportunity to learn about the challenges en-

countered during the construction of this engineering wonder. Thanks to **Alyson Lester**, YMF Vice President, for organizing this event.

#### Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Bike/Blade the Drives! On Sunday, October 5, 2003 the YMF is planning a biking/blading trip along the 8.5 mile loop around the Art Museum. Participants will enjoy having West River Drive closed to vehicular traffic and the pleasant scenery of Kelly Drive. Bikers and Bladers of all ages are welcome! Don't forget to join us at Lloyd Hall, just behind the Art Museum, for snacks and refreshments. For more information or to RSVP, contact Asha Maliakal of Parsons Brinckerhoff at Maliakal@pbworld.com or (215) 209–1227.

JOIN US for a tour of historic Mercer Museum on Saturday, October 18, 2003 at 1:00 PM in Doylestown, PA, a joint event with the Lehigh Valley Younger Members. The Mercer Museum houses a dramatic collection of furnishings, folk art and implements of early America. The architecturally and structurally significant building, completed between 1913 and 1916 by Henry Mercer and eight laborers, is a National Historic Landmark. Rising seven stories and constructed entirely of reinforced concrete, its towers, gables and parapets announce the diverse exhibits inside, including 40,000 tools of more than 60 early American crafts and trades. For more information, contact Mike McAtee at mimcatee@urban engineers.com.

#### Announcements

The YMF is looking for volunteers to organize and lead discussion sessions with Civil Engineering students at local colleges. No preparation is required. Using personal experience, volunteers will help inform students of what to expect after graduation and will respond to questions and concerns from students. If you would like to volunteer as a speaker, please contact Joe Platt at JPlatt@trafficpd.com or (610) 326-3100.

Are you a candidate for the Professional Engineering Exam who would like information about what it takes to pass? For those of you who have recently taken the exam, are you interested in sharing your experiences and insights? WE NEED YOUR HELP!! The Younger Member Forum is currently updating our comprehensive PE STUDY GUIDE to assist candidates in their preparations for this important event. To receive a copy of this valuable study guide or if you would like to contribute, please contact Mike McAtee at mjmcatee@urbanengineers.com.



#### Member Spotlight

Anita Menegaux, P.E. is the owner and Project Director of EPH Consultants in Lansdale, PA. EPH Consultants provides independent environmental and technical consulting services throughout the mid-

Atlantic region. Check out this new WBE, DBE and SDB at www.ephcon-sultants.com.

(Continued on Page 6)

### SECTION CELEBRATES ITS 90" ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR

On October 17.1912 twelve civil engineers met to formulate the plans for what was to become the Philadelphia Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. When the proposed new Section's Constitution and Bylaws were approved by National on June 14, 1913, the Section officially came into being.

As it originally existed, the Section encompassed much of the eastern portion of Pennsylvania, the entire South Jersey region, and the state of Delaware. Over the years, these areas have evolved into separate Sections and Branches, and the Philadelphia Section has become what we know today - the five Pennsylvania counties in the region (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia) and the Reading Branch in Berks County.

Throughout this year, various events are being planned to highlight the Section's 90 years of service. Upcoming editions of THE NEWS will include historical information and highlights to help cite this momentous occasion.



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#### Spring Social

(Continued from Page 5)

Martsolf, Sandra May and Bob Wright

· Awards Committee - Dave Hanly, Sandra May, Carol Martsolf, Brian Stover, Bill Thomsen and Bob Wright.

And, of course, the Social could not have gotten off the ground without the energetic leadership provided by the coordinators of the event, Section Past President Sandra May and incoming Section President Allan Moore, with the able assistance of President Ruben David. Helping this merry group in the festive decoration of the meeting room for the Social were Rosemarie David, Kim Moore, Brian Stover, Bob Wright and Gail Wright.

The tentative date for the 2004 Social is Friday, May 7, 2004. Updates and additional information will be included in future issues of THE NEWS.

#### ASCE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 2003 Civil Engineering Conference and Exposition will be held November 12-15, 2003 in Nashville, Tennessee. Watch your mailbox for information on the Convention. You can also check the National website for more information: www.asce.org/conferences/annual03.

#### "The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender."

Vince Lombardi



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#### YMF News

(Continued from Page 5)

Anita is a graduate of the University of Maryland, where she earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering in 1992. She went on to earn an M.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Cornell University before joining Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. in Philadelphia as an environmental engineer. Her eight-year career with Malcolm Pirnie focused primarily on water quality and water security projects, but was rounded out with a variety of other environmental and civil engineering projects, such as storm water management, brownfield development, environmental investigation and buried infrastructure rehabilitation.

Anita currently serves as the Professional Development Chair on the YMF board. In this position, she aims to increase younger member awareness of licensing, certification, technical conferences and mentoring opportunities. Anita is active in the local engineering community, contributing her talents to the Society of Women Environmental Professionals, American Water Works Association, Society of American Military Engineers and the Society of Hispanic Engineers. Through ASCE and other associations she has presented and published her work on disinfectant and disinfection by-product control and improvements to drinking water in distribution systems.

In addition to her professional activities, Anita enjoys swimming and gardening, and she has participated in a winemaking club for the past three years. Anita and her husband of eight years, Edmond, reside in Berwyn, Pennsylvania and are expecting their first child in November.



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### THE IMPORTANCE OF CREDIT AND COLLECTION CONTROLS IN MANAGING ENGINEERING **FIRMS**

By Andy Harmelin President AI Consulting, LLC

One of the main challenges facing Project Managers in engineering firms is realizing the importance of the credit and collection function, and its effect on the prosperity and financial well being of their firms. When clients take too long to pay, or do not pay at all, the firm loses profits, cash flow, and incurs additional costs to try and collect receivables. Too often we hear our clients in the engineering field saying "I wish I had done a credit check on that client" or "why didn't my Project Manager get a retainer on that project?"

In the past two years, the economy has undergone a contraction in key local markets. As a result of that heightened sense of risk, bank financing has, in many cases, been put on hold. As engineering firms face mounting pressures with the current slowdown, the need to collect every penny of hard earned fees becomes as important as obtaining new business. In fact, for every dollar firms write off as bad debt, 10 times that amount is needed to be generated in new business to just break even.

The main challenge facing managers is that the young engineering graduate and unfortunately some with many years of technical experience have never been exposed to the financial requirements that lending institutions exert on engineering firms. The pressure of not upsetting the customer becomes sometimes one of the many reasons a receivable is left to age. The reality of today's market is that the squeaking wheel gets the oil, and unless your client is advised, in a professional way, of your cash management procedures, you will not make the "priority" list for payment.

Sometimes, invoices are lost, misplaced, never mailed, or simply ignored. As a manager, you would like to prevent that by having some simple and effective ways to confirm that your client has in fact received the invoice, and more importantly, she or he has no objections to paying the bill. This interaction with your client during the course of the project alerts your firm whether there is a problem. This additional warning system will provide an opportunity to cost effectively resolve issues and avoids extending the exposure of the firm to substantial rework or the possibility of a termination of services.

The good news is that firms can improve their cash flow positions by implementing a Credit and Collection program to tighten up loose credit and collection areas and improve cash flow. Based on the firm's size and types of clients, the credit and collection effort will vary and can be customized to meet special contractual needs. A common plan is described below and is broken down into three

Phase I: Implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

These SOP's are readily available for the engineering industry and address the following important credit and collection areas:

- Policy on the Credit Approval Process. This provides a framework to establish a policy to provide credit for client contracts and protection of Accounts Receivables.
- Policy to Describe the Review Process for Contract Compliance. This function involves the fleshing out of the process and is designed to ensure that all contracts are thoroughly scrutinized and deemed fiscally sound, prior to the start of services.
- · Policy for the Control and Authorization of Credit Memos. This establishes the criteria for the issuance of all credit memos for services rendered and hilled.
- Procedure to Allow for accelerated Billings. This measure, when applicable, will boost cash
- Procedure to Outline the Process for Invoice Mailing. As an adjunct to the Contract Compliance process, this measure provides audit data on the mailing and receipt of invoices.
- Policy for Project Invoicing Terms. This policy provides contractual items to be considered in negotiations with clients.
- Policy for Contract Overruns and Out of Scope
- Policy for progressive A/R Calls. This starts with a 7-day courtesy call and progresses with follow-up calls and other formal notifications.
- · Policy on Credit Reference forms
- · Policy on Contract Compliance Review worksheets. This policy will be used by project management staff and senior management.

Phase II: Provide Training to key staff in both Credit and Collection and modify the SOP to suit the firm's individual management needs.

Phase III: Perform periodic audits to determine whether the SOP's are followed and to measure the effectiveness of the process.

Some firms have the in-house capabilities and resources to implement the above measures. Others choose to outsource some or all of the above functions to Credit and Collection firms to save internal overhead costs.

A.I. Consulting, LLC is a Credit and Collection firm representing over 25 engineering firms in Pennsylvania. Andy Harmelin, President can be contacted at (610) 667-3422 for any inquiries.

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Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

Groucho Marx

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### COMPANY PROFILE MCMAHON ASSOCIATES. INC.

McMahon Associates, Inc. is a highly valued consulting and transportation engineering firm recognized for responsiveness and effective solutions that help our clients achieve their developmental and community objectives with sensitivity and creativity. Since its formation in 1976 in the Philadelphia area, the firm has grown from a sole proprietorship to a 110-person corporation with seven strategic regional offices in three east-coast states (including three offices in Pennsylvania). Along with our growth have been our expanded services, ranging from survey to transportation planning and traffic studies, to highway, traffic signal and structural design, to Intelligent Transportation Systems, to construction surveillance and inspection.

McMahon continues to be a force in the Delaware Valley marketplace as evidenced by its recent awards, including The Philadelphia 100 2003; The Zweig Letter Hot Firm 2003; Rodney P. Plourde, Ph.D., P.E., President, named 2003 Engineer of the Year by Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers; 100 Best Places to Work in PA 2002; Top Engineering Firms 2002; and Casey A. Moore, P.E., Associate, named Young Engineer of the Year for 2002 by both Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers and The Engineers' Club of Philadelphia.

Several McMahon staff are proud members of ASCE, Philadelphia Section, and we pledge continued support of the society and its mission.

> MARK S. MAYHEW, PE Regional Manager

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#### THIS MONTH IN SECTION HISTORY...

As part of our 90th anniversary year happenings, THE NEWS will offer certain historical information and tidbits that happened each month for your edification. Here are a few for October:

1926 – The 56th Annual ASCE Convention opens in Philadelphia under the direction of Section Vice President Richard L. Humphrey. Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot, the driving force behind the state's early efforts to pave roads and get travelers "out of the mud," presents the opening address at the Convention. Revenue received from the Convention was set up as an annuity fund which became the Section's financial backbone. After Mr. Humphrey's death in 1928, this fund was renamed in his honor, and continues in effect today.

**1958** – Past Section President Francis Friel is inaugurated as National President.

**1963** – The Section begins the celebration of its 50th anniversary.

1991 - Past Section President C. R. "Chuck" Pennoni is inaugurated as National President.

#### IMPORTANT! 2003-2004 MEETING NOTICES

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW! The Section Meeting program for the 2003-04 season is still being finalized. Several topics have been tentatively set but some remain to be finalized. Please place the following dates in your calendar. Section Meetings are scheduled for these times and locations. We have also included some information as we know it at press time. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT THE TOPICS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE! Watch this space in future issues of THE NEWS and the Section website for more information.

**ALL DINNER MEETINGS** (except as noted): Cocktails – 5:30 pm; Dinner – 6:30 pm; Meeting – 7:30 pm **Students**: All dinner and/or luncheon are at discounted price. If you prefer, you are welcome to attend all meetings after dinner or luncheon, at no charge.

Thursday, November 20, 2003

"Quecreek Mine Disaster" • Joint Meeting with Younger Member Forum • College – Villanova University • Union League

Wednesday, December 10, 2003

Joint Meeting with Society of American Military Engineers, Philadelphia Post • Hilton Hotel, Airport

Wednesday, January 14, 2004

"PaDOT Secretary of Transportation" • Joint Meeting with American Society of Highway Engineers, Delaware Valley Section • College – Drexel University • Radisson Hotel, Valley Forge

Thursday, February 19, 2004

Joint Meeting with ASCE South Jersey Branch • Colleges – Temple University, Rowan University • Wyndham Hotel, Mount Laurel

Thursday, March 18, 2004

"Green Concrete" • Joint Meeting with American Concrete Institute, Delaware Valley Chapter • College – Swarthmore College • Union League

Thursday, April 15, 2004

Joint Meeting with Women's Transportation Seminar, Construction Management Association of America, and Mid-Atlantic Section, Institute of Transportation Engineers
• College – Widener University • Union League

Friday, May 7, 2004

Annual Spring Social and Dinner Dance • Location to be determined

#### THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

We have expanded our Section Sponsorship program this year. Many of our local firms have responded to this. These firms have made the commitment and their business cards are included in the pages of THE NEWS.

If your firm has not already decided to become a Section Sponsor, we hope you will review the many benefits available to our sponsors, and we welcome your support. We are sure you would like to see your firm's card along with the others in THE NEWS.

To those of you have decided to become a Section Sponsor, we offer our collective "Thank You", and we look forward to your continued support. This support helps the Phila. Section provide our various activities and programs for our membership. This indirectly helps our community as well, as we continue to expand our outreach programs to "spread the word" as part of our VOICE (VOlunteering In Civil Engineering) effort.

Various benefits are available to your firm as

a Section sponsor. Your business card appears in THE NEWS, and this remains the most visible evidence of your support. If you have attended any of our Section meetings thus far, you have also seen our poster with your logo on it prominently displayed in the meeting room.

Several of you have taken advantage of the Meeting Sponsor opportunity available to Section sponsors. As such, you are welcome to bring company representatives, literature, displays, handouts, and "give-aways" at a specific meeting at which your firm will be featured. If you have not yet signed up to sponsor an upcoming meeting, and would like to do so, please let us know.

You are able to place two employment want ads on the Section website during the season, free of charge. Again, if you require this service, we can offer it to you.

We hope this reminder is useful for you, and we hope you will take full advantage of the benefits your firm has as a Section sponsor. We thank you for your continued assistance and generosity in this regard.

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- Theodore Roosevelt