

the news



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The Sidney Robin Memorial Newsletter of the Philadelphia Section ASCE

Vol. 78-1

Our 93rd Year

Summer 2005

SECTION MEETINGS 2005-06 MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND HOLD THESE DATES!

The ASCE, Philadelphia Section Meeting program for the 2005-06 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 presstime. Watch this space in future issues of THE NEWS and the Section website for more information.

All Dinner meetings feature a cocktail hour starting at 5:30 PM, dinner at 6:00, and the meeting presentation following at 7:30, unless otherwise noted. You are welcome to attend the presentation portion without paying for dinner if you prefer.

Thursday, October 20	Union League
Thursday, November 17	Union League
Wednesday, December 7	Joint meeting with Society of American Military Engineers, Philadelphia Post • Hilton Hotel, Airport
Wednesday, January 25	Joint meeting with American Society of Highway Engineers, Delaware Valley Section • Cocktails 6:00 PM, Dinner 7:00, Presentation 8:00 • Radisson Hotel, Valley Forge
Thursday, February 16	Joint meeting with ASCE South Jersey Branch • Wyndham Hotel, Mount Laurel
Thursday, March 16	Joint meeting with American Concrete Institute, Delaware Valley Chapter • Union League
Thursday, April 20	Joint meeting with Mid-Atlantic Section, Institute of Transportation Engineers and Women's Transportation Seminar, Philadelphia Chapter • Union League
Friday, May 5	Annual Spring Social and Dinner Dance • Villanova Conference Center

At present, the first meeting "out of the gate" in October is planned to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Center City Commuter Rail Connection's citation as the ASCE Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement. As reported in the November 2004 edition of THE NEWS, the "Tunnel," as it is more informally known, opened to service in November 1984. More information will be provided in the October edition of THE NEWS.

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 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.



Incoming President Chris Menna passing the ceremonial gavel plaque of appreciation to outgoing President Brian Stover at the Spring Social in May.

AIRPORT LINE CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

In another example of "it can't be that old," SEPTA's R1 Airport Rail Line celebrated its 20th year of service this past spring. The route, known as the Airport High Speed Line before SEPTA assigned route designators to its commuter rail system (back when some "old timers" knew the lines as the Paoli line, the Media line, and two separate Chestnut Hill lines without "East" or "West" in their names), opened for business on April 28, 1985 after roughly 7 years of construction. Many Philadelphia Section members were involved in the various aspects of the project.

When it opened, Philadelphia became only the third U.S. city to have an airport directly served by a metropolitan rail system, and the first to have commuter rail service to its airport. (In the other two instances, Cleveland and Boston, the airport is served by the city's rapid transit system.) In the intervening twenty years, over a dozen additional cities have been added to this list, among them Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Miami, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Newark, New York, Portland, St. Louis and San Francisco.

While SEPTA's R1 trains provide all service today, Amtrak trains also operated on the line for a short time in the early 1990's as an extension of the company's short-lived Atlantic City "Gamblers' Express" route.

The Line's anniversary was cited from May 1 to 7 when fares were rolled back to \$1 each way for the occasion. (If you didn't take advantage of this, well, it's too late now!)

A BASEBALL FACT

Since it's baseball season and we've used up all of our Yogi Berra quotes, here's a fast fact. The outfield seats in many ballparks are called "bleachers." How did this name come about? Well, the wood planks used in old-time parks were under cover in the more expensive infield seating areas, but in the open in the outfield. Exposure to the sun would cause the planks to become faded, or "bleached," over time. Thus, the "cheap seats" became known as the bleachers.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New members as of April, 2005 are: David Alban, Robert Belfi, Joseph Bergmaier, Robert Boris, Christopher Deats, Willis Heisey, Bill Jones, Silas Jones, Michael Kozlowski, William Lucas, Jessica Mandrick, Jeff Miller, Michael Moscariello, Sylvia Petta, Christopher Redeagle, Darnell Russell, Jessica Seersma, Edward Sewester, Diandra Shilling, Michael Stearns, Darwin Walker, Robert Watson, Joshua Weingram, and Daniel Wright.

NEW FUTURE MEMBERS ARRIVE

We know that our ASCE, Phila. Section Officers and Board members are a busy lot, but they somehow manage to balance the demands and needs of work, family and the Section, not necessarily in that order (!). Along these lines, here's some good family news from three folks who have given high levels of service to the Section.

Stephen Moore arrived for Past President **Allan Moore** and his wife, Kim on April 25. Both Kim and Allan are ASCE, Phila. Section Members, so it will be little wonder if Stephen and his older brother Nicholas are civil engineers 25 or so years from now.

Christian Lee Rood was born to Past President **Chris Rood** and his wife, Tam, on May 2. (And, yes, we think Tam did most of the "borning" work, but we know Chris helped!) Christian joins his older sister Rachel in the Rood brood.

Also on May 2, Julia Rose Lester was welcomed by Younger Member Forum President **Alyson Lester** and her husband Greg. Julia is the first child in the Lester household.

Congratulations to all! At least one "wag" has heard (or maybe started?) a rumor that the next YMF social event will be conducted at a local Chuck E. Cheese's. We'll let incoming YMF President **Jeremy Colello** sort this one out.

Should we also expect the ASCE, Phila. Section Board in 2045 or so to consist of Stephen, Christian and Julia?

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Radbill Joins Urban Engineers

Michael E. Radbill recently joined Urban Engineers, Inc. as Vice President and Practice Leader of the firm's national construction consulting group. This group handles construction claims avoidance and analysis, constructibility reviews, contract/specification drafting and review, project management training, and partnering facilitation.

Mike has over 30 years experience in the construction management and engineering consulting field, and served as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers in both Active and Reserves capacities for 28 years. He is a registered Professional Engineer in eight states and Puerto Rico.

The ASCE, Phila. Section wishes Mike well in his new endeavor!

Markham Now Division Manager at Pennoni

Jim Markham, ASCE, Phila. Section Vice President and Staff Writer for *THE NEWS* (among other duties!) was promoted to Division Manager for the Philadelphia Transportation Technology of Pennoni Associates. Jim had most recently been the manager of the Highway Group in the Philadelphia office. In his new role, Jim will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Division and for continuing the success and growth of the technology aspects of transportation. **Congratulations, Jim!**

Laspee Named Chief Engineer for Transportation Technology at Pennoni

Section Member **Harry Laspee** was promoted to Chief Engineer for the Transportation Technology at Pennoni Associates. Harry has served as the Philadelphia Division Manager for Transportation Technology for the last three years of his 26 years of service at Pennoni. He was cited as the ASCE, Phila. Section's Engineering Manager of the Year in 1996. **Good work, Harry!**

SECTION OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTION - 2005-06 SEASON

The Section Officers and Board members were officially installed at the Spring Social on May 6, 2005. They are as follows:

PRESIDENT

Christopher J. Menna,
Philadelphia Department of Streets

PRESIDENT ELECT

Carol C. Martsof, Urban Engineers, Inc.

VICE PRESIDENT

James P. Markham, Pennoni Associates, Inc.

SECRETARY

Kristen Bowman Kavanagh,
Flow Science, Inc.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Jennifer K. Walsh, McMahon Associates, Inc.

TREASURER

Joseph Platt, Traffic Planning and Design, Inc.

ASSISTANT TREASURER

David C. Hanly, DMJM + HARRIS

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Vicki L. Brown, Widener University
Robert J. Guthrie, Schoor DePalma
Anthony J. Kelly, Childrens Hospital of Phila.
Soheila Rahbari, Schoor DePalma
Mark J. Tiger, DMJM Aviation
Ann M. Tomalavage, Malarkey Consulting, Inc.

PAST PRESIDENTS

Brian A. Stover, Urban Engineers, Inc.
Allan F. Moore, Jr., Phila. International Airport
Ruben D. David, Phila. Capital Program Office

PRESIDENT, READING BRANCH

Gerald Donnelly, STV, Inc.

We wish these brave and generous folks our collective good luck for the coming season.

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James Markham Joe Syrnick

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The 18 ASCE Philadelphia Section Past Presidents who attended Past Presidents Night in April, with the "almost" member of this group, then-President **Brian Stover** (second from right).

**COPY DEADLINE FOR
OCTOBER '05 ISSUE
SEPTEMBER 9, 2005**

FROM THE CLUTTERED DESK OF THE INTERIM (?) EDITOR...

I always like to make people think. I know everyone likes to have to think, but I do this anyway. In the immortal words of that font of information, Curly Howard, "I try to think but nothing happens." In this regard, I would ask you to think about the word "interim." Before you reach for the dictionary, if you don't already know, it means "temporary." It's derived from the Latin. It's almost as if those Latins have a different word for everything, even though it's a dead language and no one speaks it any more!

I've held the title of Interim Editor for the past two years now. It was a self-imposed title, mainly because I figured I'd only have this job for a short time. Is this a reflection on my ability to do the job or is it more your capacity for putting up with me (I thought for sure someone would be calling for my head about now -- I'm glad I didn't take that bet!)? In any event, the line hasn't formed for those who want the job, and no angry mob has called for my resignation, so I'm still here, doing this.

One thing I have learned is that I do enjoy being in the driver's seat at THE NEWS, even though it has its moments. The biggest thing I have had to get used to is capitalizing THE NEWS every time I type it.

Also, we need to remind the readers of THE NEWS (there, I did it again!) that my esteemed predecessor, **Sid Robin**, was a "temporary" editor. I recall the story he told me once about this.

When he was asked by someone in the Section (the names escape me) to fill in as editor of THE NEWS for a "short while." He filled in, but the "short while" turned into a stint of 21 years. Sid took off as Editor for a year while he served as Section President (1962-63), but he then took the reins of THE NEWS at the end of his term and stayed as Editor for another 40 years. (By the way, a special prize is available to anyone who can name either the Editor before Sid or the Interim Editor during Sid's presidency. Of course, I don't know the correct answer either, so the rules of the contest will work the same way they do in Scrabble — lying with conviction usually does the trick!)

Knowing this, it might be very presumptuous of me to shed the Interim title after only two years, compared to Sid's 61-year stint. But...let's face it — the "Interim" thing is getting old. I hear it at the office, I hear it at home, I hear it at Section events, so maybe it's time to change...?

The temporary status I've enjoyed is only there because I'm a fill-in. Am I awaiting the results of some contest to see who would become the new "real" Editor? It's not like "American Idol" or anything like that — maybe more like "Survivor", I'm guessing — or maybe "Fire Me, Please"? I can't say for sure — I'm not a fan of the "reality" shows, mainly because none of them seem to reflect what I experience in my life. I'm either out of touch with reality or these aren't really reality shows. You can pick the answer. I'm going with the former.

In reality (the REAL reality!), my intent as the fill-in was merely to take the reins and keep

things going in the urgency of the situation. I thought if someone else was interested, then he or she could think about it and then come into the job later on. Having had no one even breach the subject with me or either Section President during the past two years, I'm thinking maybe folks are OK with the current setup and the long line of interested editor "wannabes" isn't all that long (or maybe it's not even a line). From my perspective, this is not a problem. Once I drop the "interim" title, though, you'll have to wrestle the Editor's chair away from me (and I can be very tenacious, despite my advanced age!).

Speaking of age, I may not be as much of a geezer as you might think, so keep this in mind if you're thinking about the wrestling thing above. While I'm not revealing anything here, just consider that I'm not yet even on AARP's mailing list, I can't ride SEPTA for free, I'm not even thinking about retirement, and I haven't been asked to leave a Younger Member Forum event yet. As I revealed at a recent presentation I made for our friends at the Women's Transportation Seminar, I'm not eligible for consideration as historic, given the federal threshold of 50 years for this. That's all I'm sayin'...

THE NEWS has kept me on my toes, but, as I mentioned, it's all good. It keeps me busy and off the streets, so that works for many purposes. (The community in general thanks you for that!) I get a lot of compliments for it, and thanks to those of you who are enjoying it and patting me on the back.

NEW TECHNICAL GROUPS/CHAIRS

New Chairs will take over three of the ASCE, Philadelphia Section's Technical Groups this season, and an old Technical Group will be revitalized.

Dennis MacBride, the current Chair of the Engineering Management Group, will assume the duties of Chair of the Construction Group from outgoing Chair (and Past President) **Brian Stover**.

Bill Mulloy, the Vice-Chair of the Engineering Management Group, will advance to the Chair of this Group and take the reins from **Dennis MacBride**.

Mike Carnivale will take the helm as Chair of the Delaware Valley Geoinstitute (DVGI), the Section's technical group for this specialty.

As reported in several issues of THE NEWS this past spring, **Jeremy Colello** will be the Chair of the Environmental and Water Resources Group, which has been dormant for a few years.

Complete information on all Technical Group chairs is given below. Vice President **James Markham** 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. As usual, an informative and interesting program is in the works and events will be reported in upcoming issues of THE NEWS.

You know it's not all me. Our incoming Vice President, **Jim Markham**, has stepped up once again with the meeting reports and the YMF news. **Ann Tomalavage** has asked to continue her periodic pieces from "the trenches" of project management with "PM4". Others among you have come through with articles here and there, and rather than attempt to name all of you and then forgetfully leave out someone, I'll go with the general, collective "thanks a bunch".

And, oh yeah, before I forget, there's some changes at the Section's helm, as usually happens every spring. Our new Section President, **Chris Menna**, will surely continue the high level of energy and performance set by his predecessor, **Brian Stover**, and the Officers and Board have already started putting together an interesting program of meetings and events for the coming year. We wish them well.

And we're still in search of that cartoonist...

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Thursday, April 21, 2005

APRIL DINNER MEETING**"Philadelphia International Airport Expansion"**

by James Markham, Staff Writer

Union League, Philadelphia PA

The last dinner meeting of the year for the Philadelphia Section turned out to be a great one, concluding what was an excellent series of presentations throughout the year. We owe many thanks to Section Director Mark Tiger, the Chair of the Program Committee, for a job well done.

Section President Brian Stover began the meeting by recognizing the many (almost 20) Section Past Presidents who were in attendance. He expressed the gratitude felt by the Section for the guidance that was provided by these leaders in our industry through the years.

After acknowledging the Past Presidents, soon-to-be Past President Stover introduced Matt Forsythe, the President of the Temple Student Chapter, who told us about the accomplishments of the Chapter. He highlighted his remarks with the fact that the Chapter has grown from 20% of the student body to 30% of the student body in the last year!

Past Section President Allan Moore introduced the featured speaker of the evening, Charles Isdell, the Director of Aviation at the Philadelphia International Airport. Mr. Isdell began by telling us several staggering facts about the Airport, among them its 669 daily departures (that's approximately one every two minutes!) and its \$8.3 billion impact on the regional economy. He also showed some slides of the airport from each of the last seven decades, dating back to when the Philadelphia Municipal Airport opened in 1940.

Mr. Isdell moved on from discussing the past of Airport and its present day operation to unveil the long-range plans for the facility. He indicated that the goal moving forward was to have a healthy hub carrier and low fare competition under one roof.

Some of the planned projects to achieve the continued success of the Airport were then pre-

sented. These included projects ranging from relatively short-range plans for the addition of lanes to security checkpoints and construction of three new gates in Terminal E, to longer-range projects such as a proposed parallel runway system.

Mr. Isdell compared the size of the "footprint" of the International Airport with the busiest 30 airports in the United States. Of this group, our Airport is the smallest, at a total size of 2300 acres (Denver, the largest, is 34,000 acres- bigger than Manhattan!). Philadelphia also has the busiest tower in the east. The combination of these factors clearly shows why the Airport has one of the highest rates of delays and flights departing/arriving late.

After a brief question and answer period, President Stover thanked Mr. Isdell and gave him a few tokens of the Section's appreciation.

For more on the history of the airport see : <http://www.phl.org/history.html>

EXTROVERTED ENGINEERING

This article is reprinted with permission from Public Works magazine's March 2005 edition, in response to a piece which appeared in a previous issue of this publication. We have reprinted it here for your edification.

Are you proud of the work you do? Does John Q. Public really know how important your job is to his daily existence?

In the October 2004 issue of *Public Works* magazine, editor in chief Bill Palmer touched upon the changing roles of engineers in the public works department ("People Engineering," page 7). Several words were thrown about that make many engineers cringe—words like managing, leading, and ... politics (ewww!).

This knee-jerk reaction must change if our business is to thrive. All of us in public works, not just engineers, must start selling ourselves and our profession to the public before we truly are an afterthought.

Many current public works directors are engineers. But are they leaders? As department heads, for the most part, yes. As city officials? Not likely. From my engineering education at the University of Maryland, College Park, and my work experience since 1991, I can say with absolute certainty that we engineers are not the most extroverted bunch. No surprise to anyone, I'm sure. My parents were shocked when I decided to pursue engineering as a career. As an outgoing, outspoken person, they "didn't think I was the type who would enjoy it."

Add to that an engineering career in the public sector where our work takes a back seat to many other higher profile (read, "more vote-getting") municipal services, and sometimes I find myself agreeing with them. But you and I can increase our level of involvement, and we can take steps to train and recruit our future leaders.

Selling our profession and the public works department requires being outwardly passionate. I know that is not our MO — to try and make people take notice of us might cause them to actually... take notice of us! Nothing good could come of that in the public works world, right?

That said, certainly this attitude and public perception didn't suddenly show up. In my opinion, the "introverted, nerdy" persona associated with engineers was even more prevalent decades ago. Public works departments were not under the microscope like they are today. Growing up, I remember engineers as the guys in short-sleeved white shirts, pocket protectors, too-short black ties, and the ever-present large black-rimmed glasses. Yet, any senior engineer I talk to remembers times when we were in the same professional strata as doctors and lawyers! (I know, today you can go either way with the legal profession.)

Well, what happened? What caused the public to begin seeing engineering and public works as services solely to be picked on for what goes wrong as opposed to being appreciated and respected for their contributions to society?

In Mr. Palmer's column, he says we engineers would rather "...retreat into the relative safety of our equations and calculations and drawings," that we "...are forced into roles like media spokesperson, politician, manager, or ombudsman..." and "In the good old days ... an engineer could complete his drawings and just hand them over the side of his cubicle without ever talking to anyone." Needless to say, these are not the characteristics of society's leaders nor those that can sell our profession to the public.

I absolutely share the concern with the current lack of marketing of and caring for our profession and the conclusion that far too few engineers have the "people engineering" skills necessary to successfully lead in a political or other

public forum. Mr. Palmer said, "This new role is indeed more exciting..." referring to duties outside the technical realm.

I agree with him wholeheartedly. How we are to prepare ourselves and our future public works leaders for this new role and re-establish our rightful place in society should be given at least the same amount of attention as any educational or licensing requirement. The long-term health of the public works profession depends on addressing this issue.

I am proud of the work I do, and I'm working on Mr. Public. Are you?

The author, Ken Berkman, P.E., is the City Engineer for the city of Agoura Hills, California

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

A total of 30 local firms participated in the ASCE, Phila. Section Sponsorship program for 2004-05, making it, once again, a notable success. The Section extends its collective "thank you" to our sponsors for their commitment and continued support of the Section.

There are several benefits available to you as a Section Sponsor. For a low \$200 annual fee, you too can be a part of this program and have your business card appear in each edition of THE NEWS, among other perks. This edition does not contain any cards, but we will be soliciting last season's participants later this summer to hopefully have them continue for the coming season. If your firm was not in this esteemed group, and you would like to become a sponsor, this is the time to consider it. Cards will begin appearing in the October edition of THE NEWS and will continue through the end of the season.

For information on the program, please contact our Interim Editor, **Bob Wright (215-686-5538 or robert.wright@phila.gov)**.