

Los Angeles Section

Monthly: Est. 1913

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" Act as if it were impossible to fail "

— Dorothea Brande

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Neil D. Morrison, P.E.
President, Los Angeles Section, ASCE

Civil Engineering—What's That?

Over a decade ago, the Board of Directors for the American Society of Civil Engineers adopted a National Strategic Plan to raise public awareness of the contributions and impact upon society of the works of civil engineers. The Plan has since been updated, and the Los Angeles Section of ASCE adopted key elements of the Plan as its own Strategic Plan about five years ago.

A key component of the Plan is the promotion of civil engineering and civil engineers from within our own ranks. Having been involved with ASCE in one capacity or another over the last 15 years, and having considered the degree of progress we've made in promoting our profession, I am left feeling somewhat disappointed. Here's why:

- ASCE National has approximately 125,000 dues-paying members, but only 15 percent of these participate in the annual election. Where are the other 85%? Don't they care?
- Los Angeles Section comprises approximately 7,000 National dues-paying members, but less than half of these pay Section dues. Why don't the rest—approximately 3,500 National dues-paying civil engineers within the Los Angeles Section—support the efforts of the local Section, Branches, Student Chapters and Younger Member Forums? Don't they care?
- In a recent election for Branch officers, fewer than 100 of almost 1,600 members (barely over 6 percent) voted for the incoming Board of Directors. Where were the other 1,500 members when it was time to vote? Don't they care?
- At our recent Los Angeles Annual Awards Banquet, honoring those in our profession as individuals and for projects that improve communities' quality of life, fewer than 3 percent of the Los Angeles Section membership were present to celebrate these individuals and projects. Where were the other 97% of our membership? Don't they care?

I had a conversation recently with a longtime colleague, and our discussion got around to the fact that he was no longer paying National or Section dues, and he had in fact quit ASCE. He felt that ASCE was not of value to him any longer, although he had participated at various levels within the local branch in the past. I asked him what ASCE could do to win him back. I asked him if he was interested in raising the status of civil engineering and he said yes. I asked him if he was interested in raising his own personal status as a professional, to be considered on the same level as, say, a doctor, architect or lawyer, and he said yes. I asked him how he thought these things could happen, and he replied that civil engineering needed to be promoted better than in the past. My reply was simple and to the point, without ASCE and its tireless efforts at all levels, civil engineering and civil engineers and their contributions to society would go totally unnoticed. I suggested that he rejoin and thank ASCE for helping to make the community he serves and lives in recognize what he does for it.

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Reminder: Copy deadline for the December 2004 newsletter is November 1, 2004; copy deadline for the January 2005 issue is December 1, 2004.



Time to Engineer Change

November ushers in the beginning of the holiday season for a majority of us. Throughout the world, people are preparing for a wonderful time with family and friends. During these holidays, we are reminded of the spirit of giving not only of material wealth but most importantly of those actions that cannot be accurately quantified: that smile, that helping hand, that nice remark. You get the gist.

Let me make you also be aware of those who are struggling this holiday season. I am referring specifically to those who have been laid off from work and are left with limited resources to survive. They are the ones who need more of us especially if these individuals used to work because they simply want to continue that health insurance to assist them in maintaining medical coverage for a sick relative. How sad it is to think that a number of these laid off folks are aging and have not been entitled to any retirement package whatsoever despite giving a majority of their lives to making their companies as great as what they are now. Sad as it sounds but that is a fact. Apologies for bringing this up, as I feel very strongly about this for very private reasons.

Nevertheless, the main point I am trying to make here is that we are faced with both good and bad scenarios this holiday season. And by the time you read this article, our national elections are over. Whoever won that election is certainly faced with a very challenging four years to attempt to create back the life we were enjoying four years ago. However the elections turned out, congratulations to the winners.

In this issue, Our Section President Neil Morrison reflects on the pathetic state of practicing engineers' participation in promoting our profession. He compares the essence of how his industry as a homebuilder promotes itself and the professionals involved in that business with how we as ASCE, the premier civil engineering organization in the world, promotes itself. The Los Angeles Section Public Policy and Legislative Committee has some exciting opportunities also outlined in this issue to make ourselves heard and therefore become more involved with our community. Other opportunities can also be found at the Southern California Regional Calendar website. An article in this issue shows you how you can sign up to receive calendar updates.

I will close with a note that a new beginning is at hand. All listed Section members and non-members are receiving this issue. If you have not been involved with Section activities, you are definitely missing out on a lot. I encourage you to go back if you left, or try us out if you have not been lately involved.

We hope to see you at the next ASCE event.

- Cris B. Liban, D.Env.

Regional CALENDAR

Building A Stronger Engineering Profession With The Southern California Regional Calendar

Southern Californian civil engineers have an outstanding Professional community. Our professional associations host a myriad of events and seminars each month. Collectively, the dozens of societies offer immense opportunities in training, technology transfer, networking, and much more.

Yet only 20% to 30% of all civil engineers are involved in professional societies. As builders and managers of our infrastructure, we have all seen a decline in the infrastructure system. In the 1960's, infrastructure projects constituted 20% of state and local spending. Today it is 3%. The results are simple. Traffic congestion ballooned because our road capacity has increased only 7% while our population has exploded by 50%. Water, sewer, and schools are not doing much better.

By increasing the number of professionally involved civil engineers, we would not only build a stronger engineering community, but a more organized one. Being organized would greatly help and enhance the engineering profession as a whole.

How can you do? What should you do?

Learn more about other professional societies. Encourage your friends and co-workers to do so as well. Become involved in the societies that interest you and help you in your profession.

Subscribing to the "Regional Calendar" is an easy way to become familiar with region's societies and their events. The Southern California Regional Calendar is a newly created FREE monthly e-mail that features a consolidated listing of over 25 local professional society events. The calendar keeps engineers current on technology, projects and issues within the region.

The Regional Calendar helps you:

- ☛ See what different professional Associations are doing
- ☛ Feel the pulse of your profession; keep current and updated on:
 - industry issues
 - new developments
 - and new technologies
- ☛ Identify the best program for spending your limited training time
- ☛ Identify key networking opportunities

For Younger Engineers, it also features:

- ☛ Social events like ASCE wine tasting trips, basketball games, etc.
- ☛ Association sponsored (meaning cheaper) PE and EIT Review Courses

The Regional Calendar is a useful tool. It's designed with you in mind. And it's free. Sign up at www.projectpartners.com/calendar and let's build our profession stronger.

www.ascelasection.org

LA Section Public Policy and Legislative Committee Report

ASCE Los Angeles Section has elected to become more active in state politics. State funding for local projects is getting the pinch while our elected officials work to resolve the State's current budget challenges. Infrastructure funding is critical to maintaining our current quality of life. Transportation, flood control, urban runoff, water, wastewater, and solid waste projects need more funding, not less.

As a result, the Section has formed a Public Policy and Legislative Committee to tackle these legislative challenges, or at least attempt to influence Legislators. The committee is developing a Legislative program to help our state representatives better understand the importance of infrastructure funding and, of course, there is a role for anyone and everyone that has any interest.

Our program will include establishment of ASCE members (Ambassadors) for each member of the State Senate and Assembly. This is the membership opportunity to participate in the Legislative process. We ask that each Ambassador meet with his or her representative or member of his or her staff quarterly. The committee will be developing the agendas for discussion.

To be effective, we must be nonpartisan. Currently, there are 27 Democrats and 13 Republicans in the State Senate and 47 Democrats and 33 Republicans in the State Assembly. Due to gerrymandering, only a very few seats potentially change parties during elections. Therefore, regardless of a member's political preference and whether or not he/she approves of the current representative, we still need their assistance and as such must remain non-partisan. We have 28 State Senators and 33 State Assembly Representatives within the Los Angeles Section.

The program has already been used on a trial basis by members of the committee and found a very positive response. We need to find the people to get out and discuss our issues with our Legislators. We have nearly 7,000 members in our section; surely we can find 33 members (covering both branches of state government) who are willing to assist us in this very important program for the future of our state's infrastructure.

Without a comprehensive effort, our program will not be effective. We need help from our members to ensure that this program will be successful. We challenge you to get involved. Discussing the importance of infrastructure funding with our representatives is rewarding.

Michael Thornton, Section Representative
California Society of Civil Engineers

**ASCE's 2004
Member-Get-A-Member
Drive Depends on You!**

A Great Idea From the Life Members

The ASCE Life Members' Public Image Committee request that members take their (to be discarded) Civil Engineering magazines to their doctor's office or barber shop and merge them with the stack of magazines. We feel that this will be an effective way to make the general public more aware of what civil engineers do.

President's Message *continued*

Many of you may be aware that my civil engineering background has been in the land development/homebuilding side of the profession. As a result, I have been exposed to and participated in organizations such as the National Association of Home Builders, the Building Industry Association of America, Southern California, and its local Branches, and I have served as President of the Home Building Council of Orange County. I have noticed that there is a day-and-night difference between how civil engineering promotes itself and how the building industry promotes itself. The building industry is "day"—out front where they can regularly be seen, tremendous participation by all and heard at all levels of the community. Conversely, ASCE is "night"—most civil engineers tend to lie very low (see statistics above) and rely on others to promote our profession.

My point is that until more of our own are concerned enough to participate to raise awareness of civil engineering's contributions to their local communities and our whole society, the public will continue to be unable to fathom exactly what we do and why it is so important in their lives. This head in the sand attitude affects not only our stature in comparison with other, better-known professions but affects the future of civil engineering as well. ASCE leadership alone cannot combat the civil engineering profession's invisibility. We need YOU, our silent but accomplished majority, to pitch in. We know you're out there, and we need you.

So, please, come on out of your cubicles and get involved!

Neil D. Morrison, P.E.
President

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COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT:

CALIBRATION OF RAINFALL-RUNOFF MODELS USED IN COUNTY HYDROLOGY MANUALS

Throughout southern California and in many parts of northern California, county flood control districts document their flood control hydrology estimation procedures by means of a Hydrology Manual. The Hydrology Manual contains the underpinnings of a rainfall-runoff model and design storm procedure for use in estimating design storm runoff quantities such as peak flow rate and runoff volumes. Many flood control districts have adopted a nested design storm procedure representing balanced statistical properties for each storm duration return frequency. The unit hydrograph procedure is also commonly used as the rainfall-runoff modeling procedure. In order to have a useful model, two calibration procedures are undertaken; namely, calibration of the rainfall-runoff model and also of the design storm procedure. In this course, the calibration procedure used for the County of Orange, CA and also the San Bernardino County Hydrology Manuals is reviewed.

This course will be of interest to engineers and planners who deal with flood control matters.

COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Date: November 20, 2004

Location: California State University, Fullerton

Course Fee: \$145.00

Time: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

LUNCH: NOT INCLUDED. PASTRIES AND COFFEE PROVIDED.
LOCAL RESTAURANTS AVAILABLE.

Cancellation Refunds: 3-day prior notice with 100% refund.

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Course Presenter: Ted Hromadka,

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P.E. License Review Course

The RBF Consulting P.E. License Review Course for the April 15th and 16th, 2005 professional license exam will begin on January 8, 2005 and continue for thirteen (13) Saturdays, ending on April 9, 2005. The course is taught by practicing professionals and includes several unique features:

- Course fee includes seven textbooks and over 2,000 pages of focused lecture notes and solved practice and example problems.
- Enrollment strictly limited to 30 students.
- Comprehensive coverage of all subjects addressed by the eight-hour exam as well as those covered by the California Special Survey and Seismic Portion of the exam.
- Approximately 100 hours of classroom instruction.
- Excellent course track record.
- Centrally located at the Irvine Spectrum Offices of RBF Consulting, 14725 Alton Parkway in Irvine. A pleasant atmosphere is combined with a convenient Orange County location.
- Continental breakfast provided for each session.

The course is designed to emphasize personalized instruction and practical applications of principles covered by the examination. The course fee is \$1,300 and includes textbooks and instructor lecture notes. The RBF P.E. Review Course is offered for April exam's only on first come basis. Partial course classes are available to returning students and are accepted only if registration is less than 30 students.

For more information please contact Ms. Debi Blake at (949) 855-7032 or via e-mail dblake@rbf.com. You may also log onto our website to review the course schedule and register at <http://www.rbf.com>.

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Based on the Hydrology Manuals for Flood Control Agencies throughout California. AES Program Authors include the Principal Authors of County Flood Control Agency Hydrology Manuals and Authors of U.S. Government Public Domain Programs for Hydrology, Hydraulics, Sediment Transport, Atmospheric Mechanics and Groundwater Flow.

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The AES Programs and the AES Stormwater Information Management System (SIMS) have been used to develop 55 City-Wide and County-Wide Master Plans of Drainage and has been the standard for preparing drainage studies since 1980. AES Program Developers & Support: Theodore V. Hromadka, II, Ph.D., Ph.D., Ph.D., P.E., P.H., Professor, California State University, Fullerton; Johannes J. DeVries, Ph.D., P.E., University of California, Davis; Howard H. Chang, Ph.D., P.E., Professor, San Diego State University; Paolo Zannetti, Ph.D., QEP, President, EnviroCOMP; Robert J. Whitley, Ph.D., Professor, University of California, Irvine; Carlos Brebbia, Ph.D., Director, Wessex Institute of Technology; Gary Guymon, Ph.D., P.E.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Have Information at Your Fingertips

Members can now keep pace with the latest practical applications in the field. The new *ASCE Online Proceedings* is an interactive, full-text database of more than 5,400 papers from the top civil engineering conferences. The new database will offer practitioners and researchers fast, convenient access to ASCE conference proceedings. It is an opportunity to access in-depth coverage of emerging technologies and innovative procedures across all disciplines of the civil engineering profession.

ASCE members can save 33 percent on an ASCE Online Proceedings Library Card when they take advantage of a special \$50 introductory rate.

Younger Member Forum (YMF)

Everyone is welcome to attend our upcoming events!!

SB/RC Happy Hour/Get-together,	11/01/04, TBD
OC & SB/RC Temecula Wine Tasting Event,	11/06/04, Temecula, CA
LA YMF Board Meeting,	11/09/04, Alhambra, CA
OC YMF Board Meeting,	11/16/04, Irvine, CA
LA YMF Toothpicks and Gumdrops - Elementary Outreach,	11/20/04, Reseda, CA
LA YMF Speaker Series,	11/23/04, TBD

Contact Greg Sommer at gsommer@ladpw.org to be added to the Younger Member e-mail distribution list and receive announcement on all upcoming YMF events, tours, and other activities.

Please visit our websites:

LA YMF - <http://www.asce-laymf.org/>
 OC YMF - http://www.ascelasection.org/yymf_main.cfm?ID=9
http://www.ascelasection.org/yymf_main.cfm?ID=9

A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words — and Could be Worth \$1,000

As part of the *2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure*, ASCE is sponsoring "Postcards from the Edge," a contest for amateur and professional photographers. Entrants are encouraged to submit photos that depict failing infrastructure systems, such as traffic congestion or stormwater flooding. Winning images will be used to alert national and municipal leaders about America's critical infrastructure needs, failures and improvements through a special series of "Postcards from the Edge" in conjunction with the release of the *2005 Report Card*.

Prizes will be awarded for images in 15 infrastructure categories, as well as a \$1,000 grand prize. Entrants can submit up to three digital pictures per category. The contest closes Oct. 31. Entries should be emailed to postcards@asce.org. For additional contest information and guidelines, visit the Report Card for America's Infrastructure (<http://www.asce.org/reportcard/>).

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Civil Engineer – Seeking a Registered Civil Engineer with a minimum five years experience concentrating in the design of land development and/or public work projects in a private consulting firm setting. Primary responsibilities include; Preparing or directing preparation and modification of reports, specifications, plans and construction schedules; using AutoCAD Land Desktop software to prepare engineering documents; analyzing reports, maps, drawings, blueprints, tests, aerial photographs, terrain, hydrological characteristics, and other topographical and geologic data to plan and design projects; Mentoring & management of project support personnel; Coordinating project timeframes and successfully completing projects within budget, while maintaining a positive relationship with co-workers. Strong communication and management skills needed.

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vsrivatsa@neblett-geo.com

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MATERIALS SUBMISSION INFORMATION

If you'd like to have your business card or company information listed in the Professional Directory, please contact **Russ Ryan at (213) 217-6625** or e mail him at rryan@mwdh2o.com for rates and deadlines.

All graphic materials submitted for use in this newsletter should have all fonts outlined, and links included; .eps files preferred. Other formats are: Quark, Adobe Illustrator or Adobe Photoshop; additional acceptable file formats are: .qxd, .eps, and .tif; PDF files are acceptable for proofing only. Images embedded in Microsoft Word documents should be sent separately, at a minimum resolution of 150 dpi at the display size desired. Collected files, including links and fonts, should be compressed and emailed, or sent on zip disk (provide return address). Business cards can be submitted electronically as well, or send clean, crisp, b&w laser print, unfolded.



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 Typesetting & Layout: The Center Quickprint



Please send all copy to the Editor by the first of the month preceding publication.

Identification Statement

ASCE Newsletter, (ISSN 0273-6233) is published monthly by ASCE, Los Angeles Section, 1405 Warner Avenue, Tustin, California 92780. Subscription price included in Section dues of \$45.

Circulation

Circulated monthly (except for a joint July/August issue) to the 4,000 subscribing members of the Los Angeles Section, ASCE.

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

Los Angeles Section
 Monthly: Est. 1913
 1405 WARNER AVE.
 TUSTIN, CA 92780

NON-PROFIT
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 1441
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