

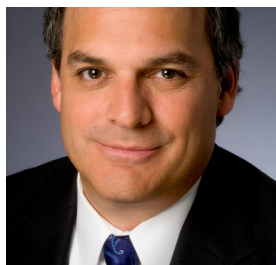
# Los Angeles Section

*Monthly: Est. 1913*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Don Sepulveda, P.E., F.ASCE  
Section President



## Pride in ASCE

I was taking a moment and thinking about where we are in ASCE, not just the Section but the Society as a whole. Specifically, I was thinking about membership and why it is so important. Groucho Marx once said "I would not join any club that would have someone like me for a member." I consider Groucho to be one of the great comics and entertainers of all time. Over the course of his long career,

first in vaudeville, then in movies, finally as the host of a game show, Groucho has been the source of many quotes and zany antics. Who can forget the man with the grease paint mustache, slick hair, huge cigar, and wacky walk. Those who like the Marx brothers really like them while those that are not too impressed just cannot handle the humor. I am part of the former. I believe that the satire that is part of the Marx Brothers repertoire is unmatched. At the same time, I have to disagree with that statement.

Like many of you, I have thought a bit about what groups to belong to and how I would support them. While I cannot call ASCE a club, I think that there is a parallel that I have to address. Those of you who have heard me talk with students know that I cringe when I hear students refer to their ASCE student organization as a club. My response normally goes like this: "A club is a group of guys at a drive through burger joint talking about their cars." I may be dating myself a little there. When I was younger, and others out there as well, we belonged to a car club or some other organization that was more of a social group than an organization. You cannot draw the same conclusion about ASCE.

We have all heard about the value of ASCE membership. We are often reminded about the ASCE affinity program literature and have seen articles in ASCE News and Civil Engineering Magazine about the value of these programs to their members. I cannot short change this value. In addition to providing discounted services, these programs also go a long way to keeping membership costs down. Yes, the Society does get income from these programs and supporting them supports the Society.

I am not going to get into the values of getting the ASCE credit card, or increasing your life insurance through the Society. I want to talk about the other values of membership. I want to talk about how your membership not only benefits you, but benefits the Society and engineering in general. ASCE wants you as a member, not because we want to sell another credit card or insurance policy. ASCE wants you to be a member of the organization that is world renowned by engineers and non-engineers alike. We are a group of over 140,000 engineers and affiliates that support civil engineering and the future of the profession.

Sometimes I am asked what ASCE is. My quick simple answer is that we are the American Medical Association (AMA) of civil engineering. It is interesting to note that there is seldom a question about what the AMA is. We can congratulate the medical doctors for their effective efforts at getting that message out. I often ask myself why they are better than us at getting out the meaning and purpose of their organization. However, I did not intend on getting into that discussion here.

Why is it that doctors consider it almost mandatory to be a member of the AMA while civil engineers feel that it is an option? What have we done, or not done, to emphasize the value

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## Reminder:

*Copy deadline for the July/Aug. 2009 issue is June 1, 2009; copy deadline for Sept. 2009 issue is Aug. 1, 2009.*



[www.ascelasection.org](http://www.ascelasection.org)

## Membership and Its Privileges

The heat of summer will soon be here but our financial doldrums remain. The economic recovery which we thought we had, as of this writing, is slowly waning. Bankruptcy is on the rise. Financial resources scarce, many are left without the safety nets that they have previously established for themselves. But this is not the end of the world. There will be tomorrow, and that tomorrow brings with it a new beginning. Such is the message that we should be carrying everywhere we go.

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) is your safety net in your engineering career. As our Section President indicated, it is not mandatory for us to become a member of this Society. We become members of ASCE because we care for others, civil engineers or otherwise. We become ASCE members because we are visionaries; we look forward into the future and use our talents in keeping the public's lives comfortable and our society sustainable.

Having been actively involved for many years, I cannot express enough gratitude to this Society for the countless opportunities. There is this great sense of pride and joy when I actually meet the icons of our profession, shake their hands, and in my case, directly work with them. While not as famous as media personalities, working with these icons nevertheless made me who I am now as an engineer, an expert in my own right, but remain short of the skills of the masters from whom I have learned from. I mean that as a humble statement to what I have accomplished and to where I still need to go in my career.

In ASCE, accomplishments are recognized such as those achieved by the engineers and leaders of the Orange County Water and Sanitation District's new Groundwater Replenishment System (GWR). They were recently presented with the ASCE 2009 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement (OCEA) Award at the 10th annual Outstanding Projects and Leaders (OPAL) Awards Gala at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, VA. The OCEA award recognizes the project's significant contributions to both the civil engineering profession and the local community. The GWR provides a high quality, reliable water supply in a region where water remains very scarce and valuable. Read about the GWR system in the enclosed article.

Finally, we also mention here the "America's Cup of Civil Engineering", the American Society of Civil Engineers' National Concrete Canoe Competition. Yes, that is right, CONCRETE canoe. As with previous years, hundreds of civil engineering students are anticipated to participate in this annual event. This year, the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa will host it on June 11-13, 2009.

Our economy will soon recover. ASCE is here to help. Participate in your Society's events. Network with your colleagues. Work with us on our volunteer projects. How great of a feeling it is, knowing that you are contributing to society.

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter!

-Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.

## Turning Wastewater Into Drinking Water

Orange County faced a serious challenge: how to continue providing water for its growing population and economy. In the past, water purchased from outside Southern California had been the answer. Realizing that the old solution wasn't a sustainable answer, the Orange County Water and Sanitation District's new Groundwater Replenishment System (GWR) provides a high quality, reliable water supply. In recognition of its success, the GWR was honored with the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2009 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement (OCEA) Award in the 10th annual Outstanding Projects and Leaders (OPAL) Awards Gala at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Va. The OCEA award recognizes the project's significant contributions to both the civil engineering profession and the local community.

"Sufficient water sources are not guaranteed," said ASCE President D. Wayne Klotz, P.E., D.WRE, F.ASCE, "especially not in Southern California. The Groundwater Replenishment System is a safe, reliable option for meeting the increasing water demands of north and central Orange County, and it is an excellent example of how civil engineering can contribute to a community's economic success, improve residents' quality of life and protect public safety."

The projected water demand in central and north Orange County for the year 2020 is 600,000 acre-feet (which is enough water for 1.3 million families annually) compared to current consumption of about 500,000 acre-feet per year (which is enough water for one million families annually). These projections indicate that demand will far outweigh supply. This imbalance will become even more pronounced in a drought. Included as a case study for raising the Drinking Water grade in the ASCE 2009 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, the GWR system meets growing demands and reduces reliance on water imported from other sources.

The GWR system takes water through an advanced purification process. This purified water is of a higher quality than required by all state and federal drinking water standards and is similar to distilled water. The system uses the latest water treatment technologies, and its structures have been designed to accommodate solar power, providing a reliable, drought-proof source of pure water for the county, reducing saltwater intrusion into the groundwater basin and lowering the amount of wastewater discharged to the ocean. Water from the system will be between 35 and 75 percent cheaper than water produced by seawater desalination, and the purification process will consume about half the energy.

The GWR system provides a new drought-proof water source for northern and central Orange County, will reduce reliance on imported water, and will save additional funds in the future by improving the quality of the water in the Orange County groundwater basin. This water quality improvement takes place when the new purified water, low in minerals, mixes with existing groundwater, lowering the average mineral content. Lowering the amount of minerals in the water, or reducing water hardness will decrease maintenance costs for residents and businesses by extending the life of water heaters, boilers, cooling towers and plumbing fixtures.

The contenders for the 2009 OCEA Award included the I-35W St. Anthony's Falls Bridge Project in Minneapolis; the H. Clay Whaley, Sr. Memorial Water Plant in St. Cloud, Fla.; the Lake Brazos Labyrinth Weir in Waco, Texas; the Montagua Bridge in LaGarrucha, Guatemala; and the Elk Creek Tunnel Bridge located between Elkton and Drain, Ore.

*continued on page 3*

## A Case of Think or Swim

Concrete is not the material the average person thinks of when they decide to build a racing canoe. But then again, these students aren't average people! Hundreds of civil engineering students will trek to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa June 11-13, 2009 for their chance at the "America's Cup of Civil Engineering", the American Society of Civil Engineers' National Concrete Canoe Competition.

Throughout the year, more than 250 teams of civil engineering students log thousands of hours researching, designing and constructing their concrete canoes in the hopes of finding the winning combination of knowledge and teamwork. And after competing in their regional competitions, the best of the best will set sail for the national event in Tuscaloosa.

"Today's civil engineering students will be the ones to solve our nation's water, transportation and other infrastructure problems," said ASCE President D. Wayne Klotz, P.E., D.WRE, F.ASCE. "Solving those challenges in the future will take the same kind of ingenuity and creativity that the Concrete Canoe Competition is teaching them today."

The competition is comprised of both academic and race events. Each team's total score is based on the engineering design and construction principles used in the creation of the canoe. Scoring for the competition is divided into four components: Design Paper (25 percent); Oral Presentation (25 percent); Final Product (25 percent); and in five different races – men's and women's slalom/endurance races and men's, women's and co-ed sprint races which accounts for the final 25 percent of the team's score. The teams are competing for academic scholarship awards.

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

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of membership in our Society. There is an answer to that question out there but I believe that it varies on who you talk with about it. Suffice to say that there is some other draw out there for that membership that has been very effective in presenting perceived value.

This gets me back to Groucho's statement. The fact is that each civil engineer is a valued voice in the engineering community and society in general. Each engineer has the opportunity to make a difference in the world in which they live. A couple of months ago I wrote about the tremendous impacts of even the smallest projects and how each project affects the community in which it is constructed. While Groucho was probably not thinking of ASCE as a "club" that he would not be a member of, his thought pattern is seen in many of the engineers around us.

In the Los Angeles Section we have more than 8,400 members. Our members could ultimately be responsible for projects like High Speed Rail in California, highway projects, and the many transit projects in Los Angeles and the other counties that make up our Section. In reality, our members, or civil engineers working within our Section will ultimately be responsible for more than \$50 Billion dollars in engineering projects within the Section alone over the next 20 to 30 years. This is not counting the billions of dollars in infrastructure improvements that were discussed in the Society Report Card.

When you think of the raw numbers in that last paragraph you cannot help but feel significant. We have the largest transportation program in the nation right here in Southern California. It is through the efforts of the Society and other engineering organizations that these projects have been brought to light. The political activities and outreach of the Society have provided input for legislation that has given us the Stimulus Package and numerous other infrastructure bills that have kept us all busy and will continue to keep us busy for many years to come. This is an exciting time to be a civil engineer and the future will be even more so.

So why are we members of ASCE? We are members because our efforts support students in achieving the knowledge that they need to graduate and become successful contributing engineers when they graduate. We are members because we outreach to K-12 kids and tell them about the values of engineering, creating the future generations of civil engineers. We are members because we want to increase our knowledge base so that we can provide our clients a better product. We are members because when we became professional engineers, we accepted the responsibility to value public safety. We are members because we want to create a better world. We are members because we want to solve the problems that we are facing in the world. The list can go on and on and each of us can add a new item to the list.

Groucho had it wrong when he was talking about being a member of a club. But then ASCE is not a club, it is an organization of professionals that feel that it is important to be a part of the community in which they work. We feel that membership in this Society is part of the responsibility that we took on when we became engineers. We want to work with others to create a better world.

Each of us has different reasons for joining. We also have different reasons for the level of activity that we take on in ASCE. For all of us it is a means of furthering the profession while achieving our personal goals. Membership in this prestigious organization is not just an item that we put on our resume. It is membership in a community of men and women who shape the world we live in and will ultimately be responsible for billions of dollars in infrastructure that will benefit the public long after we are gone.

This organization has done more for the civil engineering profession than anyone can quantify. Collectively, we have all built the world we live in, from the interstate highway system to the California Aqueduct. We will be the ones that provide safer infrastructure for our communities in times of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and future major earthquakes. This is a fraternity of professionals that likes to solve problems. We solve the world's problems through our designs, our ingenuity, and our ethics. A medical expert once said that world health issues have been solved not just by medicine, but also by engineering solutions that have provided safer water distribution systems and effective waste treatment. In this respect, we have been as important to the growth of our communities as doctors. We have banded together to become an organization that has had a tremendous impact on society. As all of you, I am proud to be a civil engineer. I am proud to be a member of ASCE.

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## Turning Wastewater Into Drinking Water

*continued from page 2*

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Established in 1960, the OCEA program recognizes projects on the basis of their contribution to the well-being of people and communities, resourcefulness in planning and design challenges, and innovation in materials and techniques. Previous winners have included the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project on the Washington, D.C. beltway, the Golden Gate Bridge Seismic Retrofit in San Francisco, the Cape Hatteras lighthouse relocation in North Carolina and the Saluda Dam Remediation project in Columbia, S.C.

For more information on the awards program, please contact Anthony Reed at areed@asce.org or (703) 295-6413.



# Nicaragua Sanitation

*San Sebastian,  
Nicaragua*



## Project Cost

\$10,000

## Chapter

University of California Los Angeles

## Authors

Julia Pasternack, Oren Freiberg

### Background

For many years, the farming population of the RAAS region has been suffering from polluted rivers and unsanitary conditions that have lead to many disease outbreaks. Since farming is their only source of income, the current conditions have become detrimental to their physical and financial well-being.

The community of interest for this project is called San Sebastian, which lies within the Kukra River region of RAAS in Nicaragua. Today it remains one of the last communities in the area to improve its waste management practices.

The nearby communities of Caño Azul and Las Breñas have prospered from the usage of composting latrines; this has led to the interest and need amongst the families in the San Sebastian community for such latrines



### The EWB-USA Response

#### *The present situation:*

Current conditions in the RAAS region indicate a requirement for both clean water supply systems and waste management systems. The implementation of composting latrines in San Sebastian will promote better hygiene, improve their waste management, as well as contribute to cleaner rivers.

A positive result from this endeavor will be a good indication that a water supply system can also be implemented in the region. The improved hygienic lifestyle and waste management methods will serve to reduce both

detrimental diseases and expenses towards fertilizers for farming. In effect, if all goes well we also intend to advocate the set up of clean water supply systems in the region, especially since the two systems will complement each other and increase both efficiency and overall health.



### Site assessment:

In March of 2009 we conducted a week long site assessment trip to Kukra River region in Nicaragua. While in the area, the team hosted community meetings in the three communities of Caño Azul, Las Breñas and San Sebastian and found the last to be in most need.



The trip has strengthened the basis of this project and has given us a more clear-cut view of the goals.

### THE NEXT STEP

Implementation for pilot phase construction is scheduled to take place in mid September. There will be an estimated four students and one mentor attending. The scope of this project will consist of constructing three to four composting latrines of varying designs to test out the efficacy of each. Currently, no such testing of our designs has been closely monitored and documented. Such activities will be required of each of the recipient families. This objective will be further reinforced by the frequent visits from our local NGO representatives as well as ewb-ucla's periodic trips to further improve the Kukra River communities.

### Donations

Our current requested budget is divided as follows:

Materials	\$250/Latrine (x3)
Equipment (tools, transportation, etc)	\$100/Latrine (x3)
Travel	\$150/Person (x5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1800</b>

Checks can be made out to the UCLA EWB and mailed to:

### UCLA-EWB

7408 Boelter Hall, M/C 160010,  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1600

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Donor Address \_\_\_\_\_

EWB-UCLA Tax code is 956006143

We also will accept any kind of in-kind donations, which can be donated by contacting EWB-UCLA at ewbucla@yahoo.com.

## DISASTER TRAINING

Classes are being organized for volunteers to help in the event of a major disasters under the auspicious of the State of California, Office of Emergency Services (OES). Classes will be held in alternate ASCE Branch areas when there are sufficient requests. Qualified individuals are California Registered Civil, Structural, Geotechnical, Certified engineering Geologists, or Architects. If you are interested in attending a class, or are interested in arranging a class, please contact the ASCE Disaster Preparedness Committee Chairman. There is a charge of \$15 for the class.

The class begins at 9 or 10 and lasts 5 or 6 hours

Classes will be given for Volunteers to assess damage and /or Coordinators from City or County to direct Volunteers for their area of damage.

To register for the class submit your name along with your Telephone number, Fax number. Zip code, and Email address. You will be contacted when 10 or more requests a class. The maximum number in the class should not exceed 20.

If your Branch, or Firm would like to offer the use of its facilities for a class, please register and provide the contact person, phone, Fax, and E-mail. You will be contacted to make arrangements.

Thank you for your support of the A S C E

Jack W. Rolston, Chair

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## 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.

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### *Publisher*

ASCE LA Section  
Jacqui Rowe  
1405 Warner Ave., Suite B  
Tustin, CA 92780  
Phone (714) 258-8306  
Fax (714) 258-8391  
E-mail: director@ascelasection.com

### *Editor*

Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.  
LACMTA  
One Gateway Plaza  
Mail Stop 99-17-2  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone (213) 922-2471  
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