

# Los Angeles Section

Monthly: Est. 1913

ORANGE / SAN\_BERNARDINO/RIVERSIDE / SAN\_LUIS\_OBISPO / SANTA\_BARBARA/VENTURA / DESERT / SOUTHERN SAN\_JOAQUIN / METROPOLITAN LOS ANGELES

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mark Norton, P.E.  
Section President



## Vigilance in Infrastructure Support

Recently I had a wonderful opportunity to spend two weeks to travel in Cancun, Mexico as part of a family vacation. I had visited Cancun, Mexico several times in the past and the weather and beautiful beaches are a real treat that my family loves to enjoy. During our most recent trip, we also had the opportunity to rent a car and travel off the beaten path a bit. In my travels, I couldn't help but notice the state of the area's infrastructure particularly as the area continues to recover from several devastating hurricanes that hit the area over the past 10 years. Despite a pretty effective recovery among many of the resorts, the impacts of the hurricanes on residential communities, road and streets and vegetation were still readily apparent. In many areas, as one moves inland from the coastal areas, the poverty among the communities and scarcity of services were very sad to see. The difference between the quality of life that we experience here in the USA and that of Mexico is significant. However, I fear that as time goes on, unless we remain ever vigilant in pressing for infrastructure improvements and upgrades, California and the USA will continue a gradual decline in the quality of service that we and our families have grown so accustomed to; potentially to the level of a third world standard.

As a former chair of an infrastructure report card for the Inland Empire, I have seen first hand how our quality of life is so interconnected with such a diverse network of services. As civil engineers, we will often specialize in perhaps two to three major infrastructure sectors for planning, design and construction services. But as one looks at the full gamut of infrastructure sectors, we find that so many are interrelated under a complex web that are only now being recognized in our society. Through my own work, integrated planning of infrastructure, particularly in the field of water resources, has become the smart way to address water resource needs with an emphasis on multi-benefit projects. Through this web, we are also learning that when one sector suffers, it often drags down other sectors. For example, with a new emphasis on curbing green house emissions, we are seeing enormous effects on how energy is used and emissions generated on infrastructure sectors such as water supply and distribution, wastewater treatment, transit and transportation systems. We also see these effects on the operation and maintenance of public buildings, parks, flood control and airports. Without vigilance in ensuring that attention is made to maintain them, like a series of dominos, sector by sector could begin to fall apart and collapse.

As civil engineers we play a major role in ensuring that decision makers and the public are made aware of infrastructure, often unseen and not thought about until a system fails. Often it is not until a major catastrophic event occurs before the public and decision makers wake up to needs that must be addressed and the role that civil engineering plays. I think columnist, Marilyn Vos Savant, said it well in her article in the Parade newspaper Sunday insert a few years ago:

*Everyone knows we need schoolteachers and nurses, and we all love the individual genius, philosopher or mathematician. But the occupational group most responsible*

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**Reminder:**

*Copy deadline for the June 2008 issue is May 1, 2008; copy deadline for July/August 2008 issue is June 1, 2008.*



## On Section Elections and Advocacy

It is the middle of spring here in Southern California. Traditionally, this is the time when our Section officers begin the process of planning and preparation for the next fiscal year's activities. In this issue, we present our Section President-Elect Candidates' Vision and Qualification Statements.

This is one of the rare occasions where we have a healthy competition for one very important, visible, and strategic Los Angeles Section position. We're not implying that having no election has been unhealthy. What we are saying is that having an election for the Section's leadership brings out more of the best from our membership. Having various candidates vie for a position always provides an avenue for discussion of the important issues of the day. Competition in this sense focuses attention not only to the position, not only to the person, but most importantly to the direction as to where our Section would eventually go. Please vote for the most deserving President-Elect candidate.

In this issue, our Section President further makes the case for the need for engineers' involvement in advocating the improvement of existing infrastructure. We have been through this path before. However, the case is more important now because of the more visible deterioration of our infrastructures throughout our cities.

How true is it that we tend to defer maintenance until it is too late. Out of sight, out of mind I guess. But is that a good strategy? How can infrastructural needs compete for other social services in this arena of very limited financial resources? Tough. However, the fundamental issue is that the arguments are sometimes not even heard because those who are expected to advocate for infrastructural needs are not around the table to make those arguments. Therein lies an excellent opportunity for us to be more involved in the process.

How do we expect results for issues we are so passionate about if we ourselves do not speak for them? Do we simply accept things as they are or do we take an active role in ensuring ourselves the results we seek? You are called to action.

Finally, in the next issues, we will highlight some of the activities of our Section's newly formed Water Resources and Sustainability Committees. The number of members and activities involved in these two committees have grown in the past few months. If you want to be involved, please contact me and I will forward your information to the appropriate person.

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter.

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

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## LA Section President-Elect



**NOMINEE NAME:**  
**Gregory P. Heiertz, P.E.**

### BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

#### Education

- MBA, Management, University of California, Irvine
- BS, Engineering, University of California, Irvine
- BS, Biological Sciences, University of California, Irvine

#### Work Experience

- Irvine Ranch Water District, 1979 – Present  
Director of Engineering and Planning since 1994
- James M. Montgomery, Consulting Engineers, 1978-1979

#### ASCE Involvement

- Orange County Branch Awards and Nominations Committee Chair 2006-2007
- Orange County Branch President 2004-2005
- Orange County Branch Board Member 2001-2006
- Orange County Branch Program Committee Chair 1999-2001

#### VISION STATEMENT

I am deeply honored to be nominated as a candidate for President-Elect by the Los Angeles Section of ASCE. ASCE is a wonderful organization that provides an impressive level of service to our members and the community at large. I am proud to take an active role in that service.

I have had the privilege of serving in leadership roles in the Orange County Branch of ASCE. The Orange County Branch is extremely active and successful. While I was president, the Branch received the Outstanding Branch Award for Zone IV.

I believe that the future of ASCE is in the grassroots of the Branches and the Younger Member Forums. As President-Elect of the LA Section I will work to increase the resources available to the Branches and YMFs for their important programs.

I am a strong advocate of infrastructure rebuilding. I will work to see that civil engineers have a powerful voice supporting it for our region. I also support increased emphasis on effective K through 12 outreach as a means to prepare our profession for the future.

I would appreciate your consideration for President-Elect of the LA Section.

## 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.

# LA Section President-Elect

**NOMINEE NAME: Jay H. Higgins, P.E.**

## **BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

### **Education:**

- MBA, University of Chicago, 1985
- MS, Environmental Engineering, Northwestern University, 1975
- BS, Civil Engineering, Northeastern University (Boston), 1972

### **Work Experience:**

- Professional civil engineer licensed in California and Illinois with 33 years of experience
- Currently in the Los Angeles Office of URS Corporation, Construction Services, Dispute Resolution Group, specializing in construction claims analysis
- Designated expert for several civil engineering projects; participated in mediations; and have given deposition testimony
- Worked on wastewater facilities design, and the construction management of water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation, building, and earthwork projects
- Construction management experience includes resident engineering, inspection, construction schedule review, evaluation and negotiation of change orders, and resolution of disputes
- Consultant assignment with Federal Emergency Management Agency as a Public Assistance Coordinator and Appeals Analyst for the Public Assistance disaster recovery grants program

### **ASCE Involvement:**

- Member of ASCE since 1974
- Secretary, Los Angeles Section, Oct. 2006 to Present
- President-Elect, President, and Past-President, Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch (MLAB), 2004-06
- Treasurer, MLAB, 2002-04
- Chair, LA Section Constitution and Bylaws Committee 2007-08
- Volunteer Coordinator, ASCE Annual Conference, 2005
- Member, MLAB Bylaws and Nominations Committee, 2007 to Present
- President's Advisory Council, MLAB, 2007 to Present
- Judge, Student Chapter Steel Bridge Competition, Pacific Southwest Regional Conference, 2008

### **Other Activities:**

- President, IL Association of Environmental Professionals, 1995-96
- Director, Chicago Post, American Soc. of Military Engineers, 1994-96
- Certified Sailing Instructor, American Sailing Association
- U.S. Coast Guard, 50-ton Master License

## **ENDORSEMENTS**

- Carl Blum, Past Member, National Board of Direction; Past Chair, Region 9 Board of Governors; and Past President, Los Angeles Section
- Mark Norton, President, Los Angeles Section, 2008
- Don Sepulveda, President-Elect, Los Angeles Section, 2008
- Jalal Vahabnezhad, Treasurer, Los Angeles Section, 2008
- Sonia Nasser, Vice President, Technical Groups, LA Section, 2008
- Karen Sepulveda, President, Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch, 2008
- Serge Haddad, Vice Pres., Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch, 2008
- Terry Renner, President, San Bernardino/Riverside Branch, 2008
- On Man Lau, President, San Joaquin Branch, 2008



## **VISION STATEMENT**

My commitment to the Section through leadership positions and participation in ASCE activities demonstrates my belief that this organization makes a difference. As your current Section Secretary serving a two-year term, and as an active Past-President of the Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch, I understand how the Section works and the steps we can take to enhance the services we provide to our members and positive impact on our community.

I am working diligently as Section Secretary to ensure that our Section functions as prescribed in our Constitution and Bylaws. I have served with two Section Presidents and the current President-Elect. This gives me unique insight into the organizational structure of the Section, as well as the visions of its Presidents. As your President-Elect, however, I will do more than just continue existing programs under the current organizational structure. I intend to build on the base of our past Presidents by focusing on three specific areas:

### • **Expand the Younger Member Forums (YMF) Membership and Community Involvement Programs**

The YMF should have the full support of the Section. I will create a Section Officer YMF involvement program to be coordinated by the Section President-Elect. Under this program, a Section Officer will be assigned to a YMF group and commit to attend at least four YMF Board meetings throughout the year, allowing the Section to learn more about YMF concerns. Along with the YMF board representative, the Section will assist YMF in reaching their goals of expanding YMF membership and making a difference in their communities.

### • **Expand the K through 12 Outreach Program**

Because of the projected future shortfall of civil engineers, ASCE must reach out even more to students and introduce them to tremendous career opportunities in civil engineering. In order to assist the Branch/YMF/LMF outreach efforts, I will create a program which will be coordinated by a newly formed Section Committee on K-12 Outreach. The goals of the program are to:

- 1) develop a coordinated approach to outreach throughout the Branches and Forums, and
- 2) identify open school board positions in each Branch area and match members willing to be appointed or run for election. Engineers in school board positions can impact the development of school curricula and support engineering outreach programs.

A coordinated approach to outreach and more engineers in school board positions will lead to even greater success for the current outreach programs.

### • **Build on Government Relations Efforts Currently Underway**

The Region 9 Governors have done an excellent job in this arena. I gained an understanding of the government relations activities after attending four Legislative Day events in Sacramento and Washington DC. I will expand the current Section Government Relations program, which will be coordinated by a newly created position of Vice President for Government Relations. The goal of this program will be to work with the Branches and Forums to move the legislative program from a once a year Legislative Day activity into a regular activity at the local level.

I look forward to continuing to serve the Section as your President-Elect. Please vote.

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cordially invites you to the  
**2008 Trent R. Dames Lecture**

by  
**Bruce Sinclair**

**Engineering Hetch Hetchy:  
Techniques and Politics in  
Progressive Era California**

**Thursday, May 8, 2008**

**7:30 pm  
Friends' Hall  
Huntington Library**

Most people know the Hetch Hetchy controversy of the early 20th century as the canonical episode in American environmental history. That great struggle over the uses of a remote valley in Yosemite National Park is usually cast in familiar terms: John Muir and the preservationists are pitted against the utilitarian views of Gifford Pinchot, and the water needs of the city of San Francisco. But the engineers involved in the battle for Hetch Hetchy also played a crucially important if little known part in the national debate that swirled around the project. Educated in the tough school of California water engineering, and in the highly competitive race to capture those resources, these men helped shape the political discourse, as well as the technical elements of that huge enterprise. This lecture examines the role of technical men in the Hetch Hetchy project, in the context of Progressive era politics, and the unique place of engineers in American popular culture at that time.

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## DISASTER TRAINING

Classes are being organized for volunteers under the auspices of the State of California, Office of Emergency Services (OES) to help in the event of a major disaster. 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 please contact the ASCE Disaster Preparedness Committee Chairman. The class lasts 5-6 hours and the cost is \$15. Classes are midweek and start at 9 or 10 AM.

To register for the class, submit your name along with your telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, and zip code. You will be contacted when 10 or more individuals request a class. The maximum number in a 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. The class should have at least 10 and not more than about 20.

Thank you for your support of the American Society of Civil Engineers

Jack W. Rolston

Chair, Disaster Preparedness Committee, ASCE L.A. Section  
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Robert J. Whitley, Ph.D., *Professor Emeritus, UC Irvine*;

Carlos Brebbia, Ph.D., *Director, Wessex Institute of Technology*;

Gary Guymon, Ph.D., P.E., *Professor Emeritus, UC Irvine*.

*for modern society is engineers, who should win the most "underappreciated" award. They have designed and built our entire infrastructure: roads, bridges, waterworks, power lines, communication systems, schools, hospitals, and just about every house in our country.*

As California struggles to address a looming behemoth of fiscal debt, I am seeing more and more newspaper editorials questioning what should be our State's priorities. Do we really need that new train system with all this debt? Can't we cut back on moving funds to water supply and delivery projects? Shouldn't we just delay those maintenance needs for awhile? Legislators too are struggling to deal with these questions and respond to armies of lobbyists and special interest groups demanding that they not be cut back. Sadly, it often seems that whatever the media picks up as being most newsworthy (becoming the darling of the moment), gets the attention by the public and decision makers. But who will speak up for the unseen and unappreciated systems that we all rely upon on a daily basis. As civil engineers, it will be our voice that holds the line about the attention to this delicate web of infrastructure systems. It is up to us to continue to speak out and visit our decision makers despite the fiscal challenges we face.

But let me also say I applaud the many civil engineers throughout the Los Angeles Section who are working hard on getting this word out through the use of very helpful outreach efforts. One of the most effective tools has been the use of infrastructure report cards which provide grades on each individual infrastructure sector. These report cards have been produced for many areas as well as Statewide. However, there are still many areas that could use them to bring attention to local infrastructure needs. Volunteers are now organizing infrastructure committees for new infrastructure report cards for the San Luis Obispo Branch and Southern San Joaquin Branch. A new effort to update the 2005 infrastructure report card for the San Bernardino Riverside Counties Branch is also underway. To all those involved in these efforts as well as the many legislative and outreach efforts, my compliments and keep up the great work in being that voice for infrastructure!

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