

# Los Angeles Section

*Monthly: Est. 1913*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John Morris, P.E.  
Section President



## Thanks for the Memories... the Year in Review

This is my last message as Los Angeles Section President. This past year has come and gone quicker than I could imagine, but it's been a great year and has afforded me the opportunity to meet many of you and make a lot of new friends in ASCE. Many of the themes from previous messages have emphasized the role of civil engineers and their impact on our Society. As I

leave my post as President, here are just a few of the memories that I'll take with me.

The joint ASCE Region 9 and Region 10 Meeting in Bellevue, Washington left me with many great impressions about our Section and its leadership capacity within ASCE. As usual, it was the YMF members and students that separated themselves with their dedication and enthusiasm. The future of the Society is indeed in good hands.

One of the most noteworthy activities of the last 12 months was my participation in the now annual Sacramento Legislative "Fly-In" and its accompanying Infrastructure Symposium. Thanks in large part to the work of ASCE Region 9 Governor Mike Thornton, this legislative outreach event was hugely successful and continues to provide an excellent vehicle for local members to communicate civil engineering issues to members of State government. There's also a Washington, D.C. version of this effort and I had the pleasure of representing the Section in the annual legislative outreach to members of Congress.

Other notable memories of this year include the Annual Meeting and Installation of Officers at the Wrigley Mansion in Pasadena, home of the Tournament of Roses. If you didn't attend, you missed a great evening. Maybe you should consider attending our next Annual Meeting and Installation, which will be held on Saturday, October 13, 2007 at the beautiful Huntington Library in San Marino. Please mark your calendar for this special event at which we will honor our stars from this past year and induct our new officers.

Some of my best memories come from my time spent with our students. These experiences included the Popsicle Bridge Competition at Cal State University, Long Beach, being a judge at the National Student Steel Bridge Competition at Cal State University, Northridge (thank our Vice President of Student Activities, Don Sepulveda, for his huge efforts in making that event extraordinary), and serving as a juror for the City of the Future Competition sponsored by The History Channel, IBM and ASCE. There were separate competitions held in New York, Chicago with our very own students from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo winning in Los Angeles.

Finally, I have thoroughly enjoyed the Branch, Technical Group and YMF meetings that I've been able to find the time to visit. While I have not quite hit all of the Branches yet, I continue in my quest to do so. It has been rewarding and enlightening and has even allowed me to assist in an *Order of the Engineer* Induction Ceremony. If you haven't seen me at one of your meetings, shoot me an e-mail letting me know when they will be and I will try to get them on my personal calendar. One last memory...which says a lot about the Los Angeles Section...is our Life Member Forum Induction Lunch. This year's event was the biggest yet and left an

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### Reminder:

Copy deadline for the Oct. 2007 issue is Sept. 1, 2007; copy deadline for Nov. 2007 issue is Oct. 1, 2007.



## Newsletter Changes

We hope that you had a great summer vacation. A lot of things have happened in the last two months. If our Section members remember, I was supposed to come in this year as the new Vice-President for Student Affairs. However, after some discussions with other Los Angeles Section Officers, it was decided that it would be to the Section's interest if I do not continue with the student affairs position that I already agreed to tackle on, on top of being Section Newsletter Editor. Thus, I keep my newsletter post and will continue to do so until further notice.

We will, however, be losing Russ Ryan as Section Newsletter Business Manager. Russ will be the new Los Angeles Section Vice-President for Student Affairs beginning on October 2007. Lorena Arce, an equally abled ASCE member and active Younger Member Forum officer until recently, will now assist newsletter operations as the new Business Manager. Russ, Lorena, and myself will go through some transition time among us during this period. Rest assured that this will be as seamless as possible.

A change that we will be implementing in the next fiscal year is the elimination of monthly postcard reminders. In the past year, we have sent our thousands of postcards every month to subscribing members to alert them to the posting of our newsletter in the Section website ([www.ascelasection.org](http://www.ascelasection.org)). However, Section officers had advised me that there may not be a need to send out the postcards. I agreed with this assessment since quite a few members had advised me independently that they see little or no value to the postcards.

I can say though that the feedback I have received is by no means representative. However, as with other implementation issues, I believe that we can cut back on sending out the postcards on the assumption that majority of our membership agree with the few who have voiced out their negative opinion about sending out postcards. If this assumption is wrong, then I hope that I would hear from everyone else who have reserved their opinions about the postcard and the value of the same.

Regardless of the path forward in the postcard mailings, posting announcements will continue to be e-mailed to all subscribing members. Members who have previously requested paper copies of the newsletter will continue to receive their paper copies. Any monetary savings will be added on to the net extra funds we give back to the Los Angeles Section at the beginning of the fiscal year (i.e., Any amount greater than three months of the Section Newsletter's operating expense is turned over to the Section at the beginning of the fiscal year for use in other Section activities).

So there. We end this fiscal year with changes. We begin the new fiscal year with new vigor and vitality. We hope to hear from you and to see you in forthcoming Los Angeles Section activities.

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter.

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

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## ASCE's 2007 Member-Get-A-Member Drive Depends on You!

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## Los Angeles Section, ASCE... the home of the stars!

As a Society, one of our objectives is to recognize those within that are truly outstanding performers and to share that with their peers and friends. We do this as a Section every year at our Annual Meeting and Installation of Officers. We also did this in the spring at the Region 9 meeting in Sacramento.

At this time, it is my honor and pleasure as your President to inform you of certain awards that have been conferred by ASCE National on members/groups within the Los Angeles Section. Please join me in congratulating Thomas M. Poyer who was selected to receive the 2007 ASCE Region 9 Practitioner Advisor of the Year Award by the ASCE Committee on Student Activities. Mr. Poyer contributes his excellent efforts to support the Student Chapter at Loyola Marymount University. Also selected for recognition by the Committee on Student Activities was Gregg L. Fiegel as the 2007 ASCE Region 9 Faculty Advisor of the Year. Gregg is the Faculty Advisor for the Student Chapter at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

The other awards within the Section are both from the Orange County Branch. These are the 2007 Younger Member Group Award, Large Groups which goes to the Orange County Branch YMF *"For outstanding professional, technical, social, outreach, and community service activities on behalf of the Orange County Branch."*

Finally, the last, but not the least, honoree is Kathereen M. Shinkai, P.E., M.ASCE, who was selected as the 2007 recipient of the Edmund Friedman Young Engineer Award for Professional Achievement. This prestigious award is presented by the Society to recognize achievements of ASCE members who are 35 years of age or less and have demonstrated service to the profession, achievements in their careers and contributions to public service.

Please add your personal congratulations when you see these deserving stars of the Los Angeles Section.

- John Morris, P.E.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

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indelible impression on our National President-Elect. We have the only Life Member Forum within ASCE and David Mongan would love to try to replicate our success elsewhere.

It would be impossible to try and thank all of the members and supporters of ASCE during the past year. ASCE, at the section and branch level, is almost totally dependant on the effort of volunteers and it's those volunteers that make our Society special.

It's been an honor to represent you and the Section over the past year. Serving as president of the Section has been one of highlights of my professional career. It's been my hope that my experiences in ASCE might motivate and inspire others to get involved and participate

Thanks to all of you for a great year!

# The Minneapolis Bridge Collapse and Our Nation's Need for Bridge Retrofits

On behalf of our 140,000 members, ASCE extends its deepest condolences to the victims, the injured, their families and all others affected by the catastrophic bridge collapse that occurred in Minneapolis on Aug. 1. The 35-W Interstate bridge's main 458-foot span collapsed into the Mississippi River during evening rush hour, sending dozens of vehicles, tons of concrete and twisted metal into the waters of the Mississippi River 64 feet below. Built in 1967, the bridge carries an average of 140,000 vehicles a day. The National Transportation Safety Board is currently investigating what could have caused this horrific incident.

ASCE's 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure has recently provided an assessment of the conditions of our nation's bridges. How sad is it that a tragedy has to happen for us to appreciate what needs to be done. The following are the highlights of the 2005 report card report on bridges.

## Conditions

As of 2003, 27.1% of the nation's bridges (160,570) were structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, an improvement from 28.5% in 2000. In fact, over the past 12 years, the number of bridge deficiencies has steadily declined from 34.6% in 1992 to 27.1% in 2003. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) strategic plan states that by 2008, less than 25% of the nation's bridges should be classified as deficient. If that goal were met, 1 in 4 bridges in the nation would still be deficient. There were 590,750 bridges in the United States in 2000; however, one in three urban bridges (31.2% or 43,189) was classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, much higher than the national average. In contrast, 25.6% (118,381) of rural bridges were classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

A structurally deficient bridge is closed or restricted to light vehicles because of its deteriorated structural components. While not necessarily unsafe, these bridges must have limits for speed and weight. A functionally obsolete bridge has older design features and, while it is not unsafe for all vehicles, it cannot safely accommodate current traffic volumes, and vehicle sizes and weights. These restrictions not only contribute to traffic congestion, they pose such major inconveniences as school busses or emergency vehicles taking lengthy detours. It is estimated that it will cost \$9.4 billion per year for 20 years to eliminate all bridge deficiencies. The annual investment required to prevent the bridge investment backlog from increasing is estimated at \$7.3 billion. Present funding trends of state departments of transportation call into question future progress on addressing bridge deficiencies.

Adding to these problems is the inability of the Administration and Congress to reauthorize the nation's Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21), which has now had six extensions since the program expired on September 30, 2003. The progress made in the TEA-21, which authorized \$218 billion for the nation's highway and transit programs in 2001, is beginning to slip as America continues to shortchange funding for much-needed road and bridge repairs.

Even with uncertain funding due to the lack of a federal transportation funds reauthorization bill, additional revenues from state and local governments have begun to make an impact on bridge projects in all 50 states. Total bridge expenditures by all levels of government for capital outlays (including system preservation and system expansion) was at \$8.8 billion in 2003.

## Policy Options

Solutions intended to ease the increasing demands on our transportation system and to improve highway conditions, capacity and safety are multifaceted, and do not always mean simply building more roads and bridges. America must change its transportation behavior, increase transportation investment at all levels of government, and make use of the latest technology. Cities and communities should be better planned to reduce dependence on personal vehicles for errands and work commutes, and businesses must encourage more flexible schedules and telecommuting.

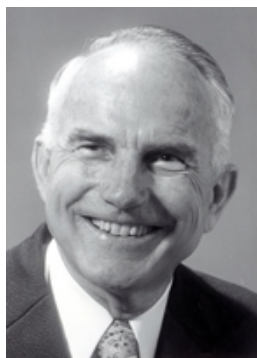
By 2010, all levels of government should ensure that fewer than 15% of the nation's bridges are classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Congress must fully re-authorize TEA-21 before it expires again in May 2005. Congress also must use all of the money that accumulates in the Highway Trust Fund to support investment in the nation's surface transportation program and protect the trust fund from abuse by removing it from the unified budget. Congress must provide adequate funding to meet current highway and transit bridge needs, and include enough funding for research and development of civil engineering innovations that offer cost-effective solutions to our transportation needs. Other solutions include private-public partnerships where appropriate, and multi-year capital and operating budgets.

- Specific recommendations supported by The American Society of Civil Engineers:
- Set a national goal that fewer than 15% of the nation's bridges be classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete by 2010
- Reauthorize TEA-21 for at least five years, using a needs-based approach to arrive at the funding level
- Remove the Highway Trust Fund from the unified federal budget
- Increase funding for long-term fundamental highway research efforts at the national level
- Establish a federal, multi-year capital budget for public works infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, similar to those used by state and local governments
- Encourage the use of life-cycle cost analysis principles to evaluate the total costs of projects
- Support environmental streamlining of transportation projects.

To learn more about the ASCE report card and our current needs for infrastructural changes, please go to <http://www.asce.org/reportcard/2005/index.cfm>.

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& Branch news @  
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## Retired MWD Chief Engineer Munson Dowd

Retired Metropolitan Water District (Metropolitan) Chief Engineer, Munson W. Dowd, 90, died June 4 at Methodist Hospital in Arcadia. He was born in Pasadena in 1916, grew up in El Centro, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees

from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

He joined Metropolitan in July 1946, and retired in December 1981, serving the last 10 years as chief engineer. During his 35 years of service to the district, he saw its regional water system double in size, and helped design and supervise the construction of much of the expansion.

Munson's career as an engineer at Metropolitan spanned the expansion of the Colorado River Aqueduct to its full design capacity, completed in 1956; construction or expansion of all of the CRA pump plants and water treatment plants; and construction of facilities in conjunction with the arrival of the State Water Project circa 1970. Munson was an active ASCE member being the Chair of the TCLEE Executive Committee in 1980.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth; a son, Munson "Mike" Dowd; a daughter, Katherine Flenniken; two sisters; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Holliston United Methodist Church, 1305 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena.

## 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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**Tuesday, August 28, 2007**

**5:30pm - 7:30pm**

Luminarias Restaurant  
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<b>Speaker:</b>	<b>Dr. Dennis Williams, president GEOSCIENCE Support Services, Inc <a href="http://www.gssiwater.com">www.gssiwater.com</a></b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Use of Low Angled Wells for Desalination Feedwater Systems</b>
<b>Social:</b>	<b>5:30 - 6:00pm</b>
<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>6:00 - 7:00pm</b>
<b>Program:</b>	<b>6:30 - 7:30pm</b>
<b>Price:</b>	<b>\$35/person \$30/student</b>

**RSVP: Stephanie Fong**

**ASAP (213) 217-5842**

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Tim Muli (RBF)

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### For Pasadena:

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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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