The Sidney Robin Memorial Newsletter of the Philadelphia Section ASCE

Vol. 87-9

May 2015

Our 102nd Year

**VOLUNTEER AT THE PHILADELPHIA SCIENCE CARNIVAL**

The Engineers’ Club of Philadelphia will be sponsoring a booth at the Philadelphia Science Carnival again this year! The Carnival is a highly visible outdoor event that provides opportunity for exchange between children, teens, families and local Scientists/Engineers! This all-day affair will take place on **Saturday, May 2**. The goal is to provide family-oriented science entertainment with a hands-on activity or an interactive demonstration to get kids excited about all types of Engineering! This is a great outreach opportunity to interact with kids and teens of all ages.

The Engineers’ Club is looking for volunteers and activities. If you are interested in participating or have any questions feel free to contact Emily Scholl at eascholl@mccormicktaylor.com.

**SPRING SOCIAL & DINNER DANCE**

Our 2015 Spring Social will be held at the Le Meridien Hotel, 1421 Arch Street, Center City (across Arch Street from the Municipal Services Building).

**COST:** $80 ($50 for government agency employees), which includes two drink tickets and wine service during dinner.

Reservations will be open through **Friday, May 8** and can be made through our website.

There is a choice of dinner entrée to be selected when you register –
- New York Strip Steak/Pommes Puree with Bordelaise Sauce
- Mustard Crusted Salmon with Puy Lentils and Champagne Beurre Blanc
- Chef’s Selection of Vegetarian Entrée

Tables of 10 can be reserved.

Parking is available at several garages in the area of the Hotel, and the Hotel offers valet parking at its door for $18.

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**ASCE’s 2015 Spring Social**

Celebration our ASCE Section with Drinks, Dinner and the 2015 Awards Ceremony!

**Thursday May 14, 2015**

6 PM Reception
7 PM Dinner

Reservations & add’l Event & Parking Info at:
www.asce-philly.org
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**REMEMBER, PA PE’S EXPIRE IN SEPTEMBER!**

As you may be aware, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists are required to obtain continued professional development (CPD) credit to renew their licenses in many states. Locally, this includes Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

As a reminder, those of us with Pennsylvania licenses will be up for renewal this year, as current licenses will expire on September 30. Renewal will require that the license holder can be able to demonstrate that he/she has earned the required 24 professional development hours’ (PDH) worth of valid instruction, training and/or education in the licensing period (starting October 1, 2013). This includes up to 12 PDH’s that were earned prior to that, not applied to the last license renewal, and carried over into the current licensure period.

You are likely aware that our Section’s meeting program is generally able to count toward your continuing education requirement (meetings that the Section believes would not count are prefaced as such in the meeting announcement) for many states. New York and Florida are two exceptions where coursework pre-approval by the state board is required. We continue to have a verification program in place to help our members obtain and track PDH’s. Also, through our monthly meeting schedule, we generally offer at least a half-dozen opportunities for you to pick up PDH’s. Over a two-year licensure period, this could amount to half of what one needs to meet many states’ requirements.

Also, you may have noticed that you can earn up to 5 PDH’s by choosing to attend up to 5 on-demand webinars offered by National as a free benefit of your membership. There is a list of over 60 such webinars from which you can choose. You will receive login information for these webinars once you renew your membership.

And for those of you who don’t yet have PE after your name and may be considering “taking the plunge” for an upcoming PE exam in the future, please check ASCE’s live exam review courses. This allows one to interact with instructors during live webinars and access free on-demand recordings 24/7 until the exam date. The courses reference codes specified by NCEES for the exam. You can feel confident with the most comprehensive and convenient way to prepare for and pass the exam. Please visit www.asce.org for more information on available courses.

**MEET OUR NEW WEBMASTER (A LITTLE BELATEDLY...)**

Joe Natalé has taken on the role of our Section’s webmaster, following the relocation of Jeremy Chrzan, who had been serving as our web “guru”, last fall. Joe took over this spot in February and has been handling all things web for us since then.

Joe is a Structural Engineer at Parsons Brinckerhoff. After working for five years at the Delaware Department of Transportation and earning his PE in Delaware, he is currently a member of our YMF Board and is an active member of our Section. For PB, his focus is on bridge design and transportation projects. He is also an avid technology enthusiast and photographer, and is happy to serve our Section as the new webmaster. Thanks, Joe!

**Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.**

— Abraham Lincoln
SEASON OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTION – 2015–16 SEASON

At our upcoming Spring Social on May 14 (see the separate article on this for more information), our Section’s officers and Board members for the coming season will be officially installed. This slate was recommended by our Nominating Committee and adopted by our Board. They are as follows:

President: Ann Marie L. Vigilante, Langan Engineering & Environmental Sciences
President Elect: Guy DiMartino, Traffic Planning & Design, Inc.
Vice President: Cathy G. Farrell, HNTB, Inc.
Secretary: Angelo Waters, Urban Engineers, Inc.*
Treasurer: Marc B. Preim, STV
Membership Secretary: Nha Truong, City of Philadelphia Water Department

Directors:
Andrew Bechtel, College of New Jersey
Briana Earle, Langan Engineering & Environmental Services
Spencer Finch, Langan Engineering & Environmental Services**
Don Gusic, Pennoni Associates Inc.**
Kazi Hassan, Pennoni Associates, Inc.
Troy Illig, PB**

Past Presidents:
Jennifer K. Walsh, McMahon Associates Inc.***
Jeremy D. Colello, Pennoni Associates, Inc.***
* Serving the remaining one-year term of Cathy Farrell
** These positions have one year remaining to serve in their current terms.
*** In accordance with our Constitution and Bylaws, only the immediate Past President will serve on the Board, and only for a one-year term. We show the most recent three Past Presidents as has become our tradition.

We will also be welcoming back Jennifer Reile, Pennoni Associates, Inc., as Assistant Treasurer, a non-voting position.

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

ASCE NATIONAL CONVENTION – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

What is being billed as the “new flagship” ASCE National Convention will take place from October 11–14 in New York City’s Times Square. A topical cross-disciplinary program is being scheduled through which you will be able to earn as many as 24 PDH’s through enlightening sessions and technical tours to sites around the Big Apple. Look for more information coming your way this summer.

SEASON SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

We are happy to report that Section Scholarships were awarded to three deserving students. After the Scholarship Committee reviewed the seven good applications submitted and weighed all factors, the selected recipients of Student Scholarships were Cameron Connors of Widener University and Danielle Schroeder of Drexel University. Megan Earley of Penn State University was selected to receive the Section Member Scholarship. Each of these awards is worth $1000. All recipients were invited to be honored at our April Section Meeting but only Cameron was able to attend and be recognized. Incidentally, Cameron is a “returning” honoree, having won a Student Scholarship last year as well.

Thanks to the Scholarship Committee for handling this always difficult task, made so by the caliber of the submissions. The Committee is chaired by Andrew Bechtel, with assistance from Don Gusic, Kazi Hassan and Bob Wright.

The Delaware Valley Engineers Week/ASCE Undergraduate Scholarship was awarded to Samantha Schneider of Drexel University, at the Engineers Week Awards Luncheon on February 20. The amount of this award is $2000.

Congratulations to all of our Section Scholarship recipients!

YOUNGER MEMBER FORUM NEWS

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COLLEGE STUDENT SCAVENGER HUNT

The YMF will be hosting a scavenger hunt for local college students on Saturday, May 2. This event will not only allow the students to wander the city in search of certain buildings and landmarks, but will give them the opportunity to network with other students and young Engineers from a variety of local universities. The event will begin at noon at the west entrance to City Hall. Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing including good walking shoes! Please contact event coordinators Adrienne Donaghue (donaghueag@cdmsmith.com) or Paige Glassman (PGlassman@Pennoni.com) with questions or to RSVP.

CRITICAL ISSUES SEMINAR

This year’s Critical Issues Seminar will focus on the topic of P3 Projects. The annual panelisted discussion will be held on Wednesday, May 6 at Ladder 15 in Center City Philadelphia. Come support the panelists and learn about the latest innovative project delivery process, enabling private funding to support public projects. The panel of speakers will include Dale Witmer, AICP (PennDOT), Frederick M. Brehm, Esq. (Powell, Trachtman, Logan, Carrle, & Lombardo, PC) and Jeffrey D. Given, PE (Loftus Construction, Inc.). Happy Hour will begin at 5:00pm and the discussion will follow from 6:00–7:30pm. Please RSVP by May 4 via the following link: http://tinyurl.com/2015CIS.

MANAYUNK BRIDGE AND IVY RIDGE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION TOUR

Led by the City of Philadelphia Department of Streets, in coordination with AP Construction, a tour of the Manayunk Bridge and Ivy Ridge Trail project has been arranged by the YMF. Described as the “crown jewel” of the Delaware Valley trail network, this reuse of the iconic Manayunk railroad concrete arch bridge will serve as a landmark trail connection between the Philadelphia neighborhood of Manayunk and Lower Merion Township across the Schuylkill River. The tour will be held on Tuesday, May 19 at 5:00pm with a Happy Hour to follow. Please RSVP by Monday, May 18 via the following link: http://tinyurl.com/ManayunkBridgeTour.

The tour participants should meet at the parking lot at the corner of Dupont and High Streets in Manayunk. Attendees will earn 1 PDH.

Scholarship recipients!

SECTION SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

the Phightin’ Phils take on National League East Division rivals, the Atlanta Braves. This year’s event will be held on July 30, and will be $24 per person which includes tailgate food and snacks, and a ticket to the game. Stay tuned for additional game-day information and a link to RSVP.

GETT EXPO

The 15th annual Girls Exploring Tomorrow’s Technology event was held on Saturday, March 21 at Great Valley High School. YMF volunteers Niki Eno, Briana Earle, Paige Glassman, Eloise Gibby, and Amanda Kessler represented the Civil Engineering profession during the two hour Expo session. Over 60 girls from grades 5 through 12 participated in the Paper Tower Challenge. Working as individuals or teams, the girls were given a piece of paper, 1 foot of masking tape and a paper clip. They then had to construct a tower that would stand on its own for 5 seconds without being attached to the table or floor. In addition to the activity, the YMF representatives chatted with the young, eager audience about the field of Civil Engineering. This event was a huge success and we look forward to participating again next year.
APRIL DINNER MEETING
Villanova Conference Center, Radnor, PA

Breakout Sessions
by Robert Wright, Editor

For our April Section meeting, we returned to the “country” with a trip to the Villanova Conference Center where, as we have been doing for the past five years, we hoped to enjoy a nice dinner on a nice spring evening. We got one of those, as the weather did not cooperate and was more like early March with a slight chill and dampness. That was not enough to deter roughly 90 attendees from coming out for networking in the great space of the Center’s Mansion, an enjoyable buffet dinner, and the choice of three topics that were offered:

REMEMBERING KARL TERZAGHI: “THE FATHER OF GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING”
(sponsored by the Delaware Valley Geo-Institute (DVGI)), presented by Past Section President Robert Koerner, Ph.D., PE, Professor Emeritus, Drexel University; Director Emeritus, Geosynthetic Institute

THE 11TH STREET BRIDGE, WASHINGTON, DC – SUCCESSFUL RE-SEQUENCING DURING CONSTRUCTION
(sponsored by the Structural Engineering Institute (SEI), presented by the AECOM team of Shane R. Beabes, PE, District Chief Engineer, Bridges, Raghu Krishnaswamy, PE, Deputy Structures Department Manager, and William F. Alko, PE, Technical Leader

RESOLUTION OF ENGINEERING ETHICS ISSUES
presented by Anthony Potter, Esq, and Michael J. Zettlemoyer, Esq, both of Powell Trachtman Logan Carrle & Lombardo P.C.

2015 PA INFRASTRUCTURE DAY – MAY 11

Members of the Pennsylvania ASCE Sections are invited and strongly encouraged to attend the 2015 PA Infrastructure Day on Monday, May 11 in Harrisburg. Infrastructure Day serves as an occasion for Engineers to talk to legislators about the facts regarding Pennsylvania’s rapidly aging infrastructure.

This will be a day-long event, starting with orientation and registration and followed by meetings with individual legislators in the Capitol. Lunch will be on your own.

More information about how to sign up as a participant will be coming soon. The deadline for registration will be April 27 to allow time to arrange appointments with the legislators.

We hope you will be able to attend.

Please check our website for more information and the registration form.

2015 PA STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM —REMINDER/CALL FOR PRESENTERS

The 9th Stormwater Management symposium is being conducted by the Villanova Urban Stormwater Partnership (VUSP). The Symposium is scheduled for October 14-15. The purpose of the Symposium is to advance the knowledge and understanding of sustainable stormwater management for those dealing in all aspects of planning, design, construction, maintenance and operations, and regulatory compliance. A workshop for non-Engineers will be held preceding the Symposium.

The Symposium organizing committee is seeking presenters for the sessions. Interested authors are encouraged to submit a brief abstract of not more than 200 words by May 30. Electronic submittal is required. Symposium registration fees are reduced for the authors. Symposium details will soon be up on our website www.villanova.edu/vusp.

For information on joining the VUSP contact Dr. Robert Traver through the VUSP webpage, www.villanova.edu/vusp.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

ACE MENTOR PROGRAM NAMES BROWN TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Eastern Pennsylvania Affiliate chapter of the national ACE Mentor Program has named former ACE student participant and current mentor team leader Kevin Brown, Jr., to its board of directors. Brown is a construction manager with Urban Engineers.

“Kevin embodies the mission of ACE and the power of the program to shape lives and careers,” said ACE Eastern Pennsylvania Affiliate Director Tiffany Millner. “His roles with ACE as a student and a mentor add an exciting and unique perspective to our board.”

Kevin represents the full circle of ACE mentoring and career development. He attended George Washington Carver High School for Engineering and Science, where he was a student participant in the ACE Mentor Program. His experience prompted him to become the first in his family to attend college. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Civil Engineering from Widener University. We congratulate Kevin on this appointment.

GRAY NAMED ASSOCIATE

TimHaahs recently named Chris Gray as an Associate of the firm. Chris will continue in his current role as Director of Operations, leading the firm’s production staff. He has been with TimHaahs for 10 years, developing from a quality Project Engineer to an invaluable Project Manager with a thorough understanding of all aspects of parking structure restoration, design and construction. Congratulations, Chris!

NEWLY-INSTALLED LIFE MEMBERS HONORED IN APRIL

Life Membership in ASCE is a major milestone in a member’s tenure. To achieve Life Membership, one must:
- have reached the age of 65,
- have paid dues for a minimum of 30 years, and
- have had 10 years continuous membership immediately preceding the attainment of Life Membership

Life Members are exempt from dues and need only pay a small service fee to receive ASCE News and Civil Engineering magazine.

For our “Class of 2015”, we are proud to have welcomed a total of 12 newly-minted Life Members to our ranks:

- Martin Ballod; Angelo Capuzzi; Nicholas Cirilli; Danold Erb; David Friedman; Joseph Hackenbrecht; Richard Haneiko; John Interrante; David Sands; Richard Schmehl; Lawrence Tennity; Kenneth Yerger

We were pleased to be able to have Messrs. Capuzzi, Haneiko, Sands and Schmehl in attendance at our April Section meeting as our guests for their citation and congratulations.
CONSTRUCTION TECHNICAL GROUP LUNCHEON TOUR
THURSDAY, MAY 14

SUBJECT: Tour of Dilworth Park

SPEAKERS: Andrew Scott, PE, Senior Vice-President, Urban Engineers, Inc.: Introduction by Steve Bussey, Vice President of Parks and Streetscape Operations, Center City District

TIME: 12:00 Noon – 1:00 PM

LOCATION: Dilworth Park – West of City Hall

COST: No cost

Dilworth Park, on the west side of City Hall, is the city’s lively new centerpiece, with a lawn, tree groves, Garces café, and fountain, which converts to an ice skating rink in winter. It is designed as a high-quality gateway to public transit and as a civic place with programmed activities for the public. This tour will focus on some of the challenges that were addressed during the construction of the plaza. We will discuss construction of the fountain, the structural glass pavilions, underground utilities, and structural changes to SEPTA’s Market Frankford Line.

Participation in this presentation entitles each attendee to one (1) PDH for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Professional Engineer Continuing Education Requirements. PDH certificates will be distributed at the end of the presentation.

Please note that this tour is limited to 20 people and is currently closed to reservations. However, wait-list spots will still be accepted on a first-come-first served basis.

For reservations, please contact Dennis Mac Bride at dmacbride@septa.org no later than May 7.

Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind.

— Bruce Lee

DELaware Valley Science FAirs — WE WENT, WE REVIEWED, WE JUDGED, WE SELECTED...

In many ways a harbinger of spring, the Delaware Valley Science Fairs happens annually to showcase the “best and brightest” from several local science project competitions. While April Fool’s Day, its schedule for this year, was not a particularly springlike day at the start, our Section’s judging contingent made the trip to the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, as we have done for the past 22 years (!), to review the efforts of local students who have gotten this far.

We are hopeful that we are able to recognize and encourage some future Engineers who we believe are deserving of special recognition. Our team of intrepid, esteemed and (or?) knowledgeable judges spent the day at the Fairs and reviewed most of the over 1000 individual student efforts to find those with some Engineering potential.

Even though the projects are classified into various science disciplines, including Engineering, our judges often find that they must review many projects in other areas such as physics, earth sciences, environmental sciences, and mathematics that may touch on Engineering (or sometimes are merely misplaced). The quality of many of the entries makes the decision even that much more difficult as well.

After a lot of reviewing (involving a good deal of walking around the expanse of the Expo Center), our judges managed to sort through a number of well-prepared projects and come up with two winners in each of the categories of Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12.

The winning students and their projects were:

GRADES 6-8 FIRST PLACE
MAYA PAREKH
7th Grade
Springhouse Middle School, Allentown
“Build Bridges and Blow Them Away!”

GRADES 6-8 SECOND PLACE
MEGAN CHEN
6th Grade
Newark Charter School, Newark, DE
“Eggitecture”

GRADES 9-12 FIRST PLACE
JESSICA OLSEN
10th Grade
Marine Academy of Technology/Environmental Science, Manahawkin, NJ
“The Effects of Varying Ratios of Portland Cement, Sand and Gravel on the Strength of Concrete”
(if this sounds familiar, Jessica won Second Place in this category last year, with her similar project, “What are the Effects of Acid Rain on Concrete With Varying Ratios of Portland Cement, Sand and Gravel?”)

GRADES 9-12 SECOND PLACE
NICOLE WARGO
11th Grade
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy, Philadelphia
“Filtration System Using Natural Materials to Purify Water for Developing Countries”
Past Section President and “chief judge” Chris Rood, our long-time coordinator of the Section’s efforts and judging for the Fairs, attended the award ceremony on April 2 and presented commemorative plaques and checks to the winning students ($100 for each First Place and $75 for each Second Place winner). The First Place winners were invited to attend the Spring Social, as we usually do, and we hope they will be able to attend so the rest of us can see the engineers of the future and allow them to display their winning efforts.

Last year, we noted the specific absence of a truss bridge among the winning efforts. It is usually a popular topic in the competition. We are proud to say it has returned, in our First Place Grades 6-8 project (which is not necessarily related to destruction of bridges, but you’ll need to attend our Spring Social to find out more!).

You may also be detecting a trend, as all of our winners this year are female, but we’ll leave any further deduction to you, the reader.

Thanks to the students and to those who participated in this event, including Section Judges Chris Rood, Ruben David and Bob Wright, with assistance from Chris Menna.

More information on the Fairs can be found at www.drexel.edu/dvsf.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING INSTITUTE (SEI) JOINT MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 21

SUBJECT: Ethical Foundations for Engineering and Construction

SPEAKER: Ted Smulski, DEDC Consulting Engineers

TIME: 5:30 PM – 9:00 PM

LOCATION: DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Philadelphia-Valley Forge, 301 W. DeKalb Pike, King of Prussia

COST: ASCE/SEI and ACI members: $50 in advance, $55 after the deadline and at the door; Others: $60 in advance, $65 after the deadline and at the door

RSVP: Due by 5:00 PM Monday, May 18 – please visit www.epdaci.org for registration and payment options

The SEI Technical Group will conduct this joint meeting with the Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware Chapter of the American Concrete Institute (ACI). It will provide an overview of professional development hour (PDH) regulations, Codes of Ethics, public perceptions and ethical theories, and will help participants to develop an ethical framework for making decisions and build character for consistent ethical behavior.

PDH certificates will be distributed at the end of the presentation.

For more info, please contact Debra Smulski at debsmulski@aol.com or (302) 765-3732.
WHY COMMUTER TRAINS AREN’T GETTING ANY LESS CROWDED

If you ride a train to work or even occasionally for whatever purpose, like many of us, you’re finding there’s less space on the trains these days. Locally, ridership on trains on SEPTA and New York’s three commuter rail operators continues to grow and has exceeded or approached record levels over the past several years. Those growing numbers cause crowding at rush hour, and beyond. But the railroads say stubborn physical and political constraints will probably prevent them from adding seats or service any time soon.

As the economy recovers and bridge and tunnel tolls keep rising, riders are flocking to transit, even despite the decreases recently experienced in gasoline prices.

In New York, the Long Island Railroad has capacity issues and can’t simply add more trains because of limited track space. It has nine branches that converge on a three-track bottleneck beneath the East River that it shares with freight and Amtrak trains. Most of those trips end at Penn Station, where track space is at a premium. Trains can’t be any longer since they already “max out” at 12 cars and many outlying platforms can only accommodate 8 cars, which adds minutes at each stop and clogs the schedule, which means fewer trains.

The morning rush runs more trains in a shorter span of time than the evening rush. To add more service in the morning, there needs to be more space in the rail yards for trains to turn around and line up one after the other, ready to go. But the existing yards are overtaxed and the railroad has tried to buy land for rail yards near Huntington and in Suffolk County, where local homeowners and elected officials have stopped them.

New York’s Metro North Railroad has six fewer branch lines and more rail yard space than the Long Island Railroad, but it, too, has short platforms and is bursting with passengers, especially on the New Haven Line. Metro-North would like to add double-decker trains, which carry more people and are used by commuter lines around the country, including the LIRR and New Jersey Transit. But clearances on the approach to Grand Central Terminal, which is a four-track tunnel beneath Park Avenue built in the 1870s, restricts car height to 14 feet 11 inches.

New Jersey Transit, the connector between that state and New York Penn Station, has dozens of double-decker trains that fit through tunnels under the Hudson River. The problem is the number of tunnels – two – which carry all of the Amtrak and commuter train traffic between Manhattan and points west. Peak period track slots into and out of New York City are all filled, and no additional trains can be added into the city during peak hours. If something goes wrong then trains become quickly backed up.

The obvious solution is to double capacity by building another tunnel. That’s what the Access to the Region’s Core (ARC) tunnel was designed to do before New Jersey Governor Chris Christie killed it in 2010. Amtrak is working on a substitute called the Gateway Tunnel, but that’s a decade or more away. That leaves commuter rail riders to pack into trains not designed for standees, the way subway cars are. And while most subway rides last 15 to 25 minutes, commuter train rides can be more than two hours one way. NJ Transit is trying to alleviate crowding by buying more double-decker trains and beefing up the light rail system that siphons off riders to the PATH train. This reinforces and supports NJT’s effort to spread the ridership on different modes.

Closer to home, SEPTA has an advantage of four good through tracks serving its busy Center City stations. However, trains from 13 separate branches must share those four tracks, and schedules are already very tight in peak hours, so the addition of any trains is difficult. Additionally, the constraints that SEPTA faces include the vehicle fleet and parking availability at outlying stations. The fleet is old (two-thirds of the electric cars have reached age 40) and already at maximum use in the peak hours. Parking lots generally fill early each day and expansion has been thwarted because of concerns about additional traffic in station areas.

SEPTA is investigating the purchase of bi-level cars which would expand capacity on some runs, but the procurement process is often lengthy, thus the cars would likely not be on the property for another 5 years, and new electric locomotives must be purchased to pull these cars and replace the elderly and unreliable electric locos currently in use.

And that would seem to be the message, for now, from the railroads to their combined annual ridership of 245 million: If you don’t like standing on a jammed commuter train, try other ways of getting to work while we figure out how to add capacity.

Thanks to the American Public Transportation Association for this information.

OR, IF YOU DECIDE TO DRIVE AND AVOID THOSE CROWDED TRAINS...

What not to do when trying to talk your way out of a traffic ticket

Thoughts go through our minds when we see the flashing lights of a police car in our rear view mirrors. What did I do (so I know where to start my excuse list)? How much will the ticket cost? How much will my insurance go up? And where is my registration and insurance card?

In 2013 Insurance.com published a list of the most common excuses that drivers use. Nearly half of the drivers surveyed used one of these – I didn’t see the speed limit sign, I’m lost and unfamiliar with the roads, I didn’t know I was speeding. Of course, these being the most common, the police have heard them as well. Thus, if you want to get out of that ticket, you need to be more creative, coming up with something the officer hasn’t already heard too many times, something heartfelt and sincere, and something that doesn’t insult the officer’s intelligence. And it’s something that you need to come up with usually in a hurry given the immediacy and urgency of the encounter.

So don’t use these.

A 67-year-old man was pulled over in Alberta for doing 180 kph in a 100 zone. His excuse was that he was trying to dry off his freshly washed car. The judge agreed to help him keep his car clean by suspending his license for 45 days and fining him $800.

A 40-year-old man in England was clocked at 103 mph, more than 40 over the limit. When pulled over, the man explained that he didn’t realize he was going so fast because his dyslexia makes it difficult for him to read the speedometer. He was banned from driving for three years.

In Des Moines a 36-year-old woman faked her own death to avoid payment of $500 in outstanding traffic tickets. She forged a letter from her mother advising the local courts that she died in a traffic accident and included a phony obituary made to look like it was right out of the local newspaper with the letter. She almost got away with it, but a month after her alleged death she was stopped again for a traffic violation. She is facing a 5-year prison term.

A police officer offered what he thought was the most original excuse he had heard. He related that he stopped a man for speeding and asked the man why he was in such a hurry. The man replied that he couldn’t see the speedometer, even though it was clearly visible to the officer from outside the car. The man sheepishly added that he obviously had his head so far in an unprintable orifice that he couldn’t possibly know how fast he was going. The man got off with a warning and a chuckle from the officer.

Thanks to Roads & Bridges for this information.

* N – ASCE – not always something concerning engineering...

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WATER RESOURCES TECHNICAL GROUP PLANNING

The Environmental and Water Resources Group will be having a Steering Committee meeting on May 11 in Blue Bell to plan its program for the coming season. If you have any topic or speaker suggestions or would like to join the Committee, please contact Eric Lindhult at (732) 570-8086 or elindhult@whitmanco.com.
TECHNICAL GROUPS/CHAIRS

Information on the ASCE, Philadelphia Section’s Technical Groups is given below. 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 appropriate Group Chair.

CONSTRUCTION

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OVER AND OUT...
As we conclude another successful season and our Section’s extended summer vacation is in sight, the publication of THE NEWS is completed. (While we like to think of this as a somewhat sad occasion, we realize there will probably be some dancing in the streets…) As has become our custom, the busy and dedicated staff of THE NEWS will put our pens, blue pencils and keyboards down, with the promise that we will be extracted from the garden briefly to grind out a short summer edition toward the end of June. We know that some of you (OK, probably most of you) will wonder why we need a break and from what, but this is of you (OK, probably most of you) will wonder why we need a break and from what, but this is of us (OK, probably most of you) will wonder why we need a break and from what, but this is of what we do, and it works, so we’ll keep doing it. This, this is our last full edition of THE NEWS until we start up again in the fall.

We hope our legions of fans will be able to bear with (or without?) us until then. If not, and you find yourself in need of a NEWS “fix”, you can always catch up the issues you missed in the archives on our website. We wish you a good summer and we’ll be here to welcome you back in September.

THANKS AGAIN TO OUR SPONSORS!
As you have seen, the Section Sponsorship Program was once again popular this season, with 17 firms taking part and supporting us. We extend our special and collective THANKS to each sponsor for their financial commitment and support. Sponsor logos have also been included in a special Sponsors section of our website, where a direct link is provided to each sponsor’s website to allow folks to easily visit and review potential employment openings and positions. In addition, their business cards are published in each edition of THE NEWS to show their commitment and support.

Of course, the key to success is repetition (or something like that), so we’ll be contacting current sponsors later this summer to see if they’ll go again in the coming season. We hope the program will be as successful then as well.

If you have an interest in joining our sponsorship program, please contact Bob Wright at newseditor@asce-philly.org for more details.

PAST PRESIDENTS HONORED IN APRIL
It has become another in a series of Section traditions to honor our Past Section Presidents at our April meeting. Each April, we invite them to come out, be recognized, and enjoy a dinner courtesy of the Section (not necessarily in that order of priorities!) to cite their contributions to the Section. We are always happy to see them, and many of them are in attendance at Section meetings when their busy schedules permit.

This year, we were pleased to see 11 of them taking the time to be at the April meeting:
Robert Koerner, 1975-76
William Malarkey, 1983-84
J. Richard Weggel, 1989-90
Klaus Fuelleborn, 1992-93
Robert Wright, 1993-94
William Thomsen, 1994-95
Faruq Siddiqui, 1999-2000
Thomas Branigan, 2000-01
Chris Rood, 2001-02
Ruben David, 2002-03
James Markham, 2007-08

Thanks to Kazi Hassan for contacting the Past Presidents and getting them to come out.

2015 SECTION AWARDS TO BE PRESENTED AT SPRING SOCIAL
Our Section Awards will be presented at our Annual Spring Social and Dinner Dance on May 14 at the Le Meridien Hotel. A total of seven Award recipients have been nominated for these honors and approved by our Section Board of Directors. The honorees are:
• Jeff Knueppel, SEPTA — Philadelphia Civil Engineer of the Year
• Chris Gray, TimHaahs — Philadelphia Young Civil Engineer of the Year
• Amanda Kessler, Amtrak — Young Government Engineer of the Year
• Angelo Waters, Urban Engineers — Environmental/Water Resources Engineer of the Year
• Don Gusic, Pennooni Associates — Transportation Engineer of the Year
• Les Toaso — Government Service Award
• Kolleen Backlund, DiGioia Gray Associates — Community Outreach and Service Award

We additionally will be citing three Section members who have received National and Regional ASCE honors at this time — Anthony Bartolomeo, winner of the 2014 President’s Medal; Robert Traver, recipient of the William H. Wisely American Civil Engineering Award, and Ann Tomalavage, recognized for her chair of the 2014 PA Report Card effort.

We hope you will join us at the Social to honor our Awardees for this year.

When we return from our summer vacation, in the October edition of THE NEWS, we will present more information on the awardees as well as a detailed report on the Social. (Or you could just attend the Social and not have to wait until October…!)