



The Engineering Voice

American Engineering Alliance

Fall 2005

Chairperson's Report

In the last Newsletter, I reported that we were anxiously looking forward to the introduction of legislation, calling for a Deputy Mayor for Infrastructure for the City of New York, on August 17th, 2005 on the steps of City Hall. At the last minute the City Council staff lawyers raised some issues with the legislation, and they convinced Councilmember Monserrate, the sponsor of the legislation, to postpone its introduction into City Council. It's ironic that the lawyers who drafted this legislation would raise objections to a bill that they crafted and was reviewed internally by other members of their group. At any rate, we did save the day. We held a press conference at City Hall and Councilmember Monserrate addressed our colleagues who attended, and reiterated his strong support for this legislation and his commitment to get the legislation implemented.

I would like to thank Local 375, Technical Guild (the union that represents all technical employees working for the City of New York) who thru their contacts, allowed us to hold our conference in City Hall despite the fact that the original event had been cancelled. In particular, I want to thank Claude Fort, PE, President of Local 375, Ahmed Shakir, PE, Secretary of Local 375 (and also AEA Vice Chairperson) and Michelle Keller-Ng, 2nd V.P. of Local 375. In the coming weeks and months we will be mobilizing the influence and political clout of Unions, as well as other stakeholders, to help us achieve our common goal.

Although disappointed by the City Council staff lawyers, we took it in stride and continued our efforts. Soon after, we setup an appointment with the lawyers to address their concerns. They basically stated that the legislation would not pass a legal challenge if enacted since it violates the City Charter in that it restricts the power of the Mayor. I personally don't buy this argument. But unfortunately we have to work with these people and to accomplish our goal we have to make compromises.

Following our meeting with the lawyers, we sat down

with Councilmember Monserrate and his staff to plan our next move. It was decided to introduce our Proposal as a Resolution into City Council urging the Mayor to create the position of Deputy Mayor for Infrastructure by Executive Order. We are now in the process of finalizing this Resolution, which will be introduced in the next few weeks. Hopefully, this Resolution format will allow us to engage the Mayor in a dialogue that will lead to the adoption of our Proposal. If it turns out that the Mayor is not interested or is against our Proposal, then we will be pursuing a fall back plan. More on this later as events unfold. Rest assured that regardless how things play out, we will continue with our agenda until we achieve our goal. We are in this for the long haul.

AEA has invested a lot of time and effort in moving our Infrastructure Proposal forward. The Board views this as a key initiative that once implemented, will act as a powerful catalyst for change. We firmly believe that if we can get a Deputy Mayor for Infrastructure for New York City, we will set the stage for success elsewhere. As they say, "If you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere." With that thought in mind, we will do whatever it takes to make it happen.

Besides focusing on the Infrastructure Proposal, AEA has been pursuing other issues. As an active member organization of the Metropolitan Engineering Societies Council (MESOC) (website: www.mescnyc.org), AEA has been at the forefront in getting our sister Engineering Societies to work together on common challenges and concerns. I am happy to report that MESOC, which represents 24 Engineering Societies in the New York Metropolitan Area, is the closest thing we have of a unified Profession. We are working hard to show the rest of the country that we can get our act together as a Profession. I hope that the example we are setting here in New York City will be emulated by the national engineering societies (e.g. NSPE, ASCE, IEEE, ASME, etc.) headquartered in Washington, D.C.

MESOC will be instrumental in getting our

Infrastructure Proposal implemented as well as supporting our other initiatives. Under the capable leadership of its President, Wasyl Kinach, PE, MESC has evolved into an effective forum for advancing the interests of the Profession. The monthly Board meetings of MESC are effective in getting the Engineering Community of the New York Metropolitan Area to act and speak with one voice.

Another issue that AEA has continued to support is Immigration Reform. We have advocated for a more rational immigration policy and have supported others who are actively engaged in trying to get Congress to address this vital issue in a sensible way. We have brought this issue to the attention of MESC and have mobilized our fellow Engineers to fax, e-mail, and call our elected officials in Washington when alerted by our colleagues who are actively following the actions in Congress. I would like to thank Bob Johnson, PE, for keeping the members of our Profession informed on such a critical subject and in particular for his persistent efforts to get our Engineering Societies to take a more active role in addressing this immigration issue.

Given the many challenges facing the Profession, AEA has been forced to select those challenges that are most pressing. We would love to take on the myriad problems that beset our Profession. However, limited resources restrict the number of issues we can address. This brings up the need to grow AEA. We need to increase membership dramatically so that we can have the resources to tackle the many challenges that confront us. You can play a vital role in growing AEA. You can spread the message of AEA and recruit new members. Given the low membership fee of \$20, it should not be difficult to recruit new members. Unfortunately, Engineers won't join an organization just because it's affordable. You have to convince them that it's in their best interest to join and it's the best long-term investment they can make for themselves and the Profession. Please feel free to contact the membership chair, Verghese Menachery, PE, or myself if you need guidance or assistance.

One of the major concerns of the Board is communicating with our members, who are spread throughout the country and even overseas. Right now the only means of communication is this Newsletter and our website. We want to keep you informed of what we do. A quarterly Newsletter doesn't do justice to all the varied activities we undertake. We would like to use the Internet, specifically e-mail and our website, to bridge this

gap. Please send us your e-mail so that we can update you more frequently on what AEA is doing. We will also be updating our website in the coming months so that we can keep you better informed.

I thank you for your faith in the mission of AEA and your continued support. Together we can achieve a better tomorrow for the Engineering Profession.

- *Salvatore Galletta, P.E.*

Adjutant's Call

Blue Bayou

It was just a few days after Katrina struck that I was enjoying one of my favorite penny slot machines in an Atlantic City casino close to a cocktail lounge that had live entertainment. In the aftermath of that terrible hurricane, my mind had been very much on the tragedy, and the behavior of public officials and the engineering community during the last few hundred years, and how this cataclysm was destined to happen. Intellectually I understood, and was angry at myself as well as the powerless condition of our Profession. At this particular time, however, I was intent upon hitting some jackpots.

Possibly because the speaker volume from the lounge act was turned up for the next number, or possibly because my attention accidentally wandered in that direction, I could hear the unmistakable words to "Blue Bayou". By the time the singer got to "...If I could only see, that familiar sunrise, through sleepy eyes, how happy I'd be", I had such an overwhelming emotional experience. Tears welled in my eyes, and I saw the whole tragedy in a purely emotional way.

Even now as I write this article, I am fighting tears. "Blue Bayou" has become my slogan for refusing to accept arbitrary, capricious and unsafe parameters placed by non-Engineers in telling us what they want us to do. I have even belled it out at several meetings when greeted by this type of nonsense, as a war cry (with only slightly concealed anger).

The Katrina tragedy has left me in this state. I can no longer accept the level of nonsense I had been previously accustomed to take from individuals with power, but no qualifications. Maybe I'm just getting older and ornerier, but then again maybe it's time to become more tenacious in defending the health and

safety of people who are not in a position to defend themselves.

Ed Turner on the Ground in Mississippi

Ed just can't help being on the front lines. Some of his recent assignments were as critical Engineering support for combating forest fires, and now he is part of the team that manages a key base camp for the Gulf Coast reconstruction effort, mobilized as a result of Hurricane Katrina. He has already been there several months, and will be there several more. We send him our love and support, and urge him to take good care of himself. We send our love and support to Debra, Ed's wife, who continues to make sacrifices for the sake of us all.

RESPONSIBLE CHARGE on DVD or VHS

The story of Ed Turner, P.E./L.S. and his battle to defend Responsible Charge against those who would place the Public in Danger for their own selfish interests, is completely and accurately described in a special 32-minute presentation, especially designed for a classroom setting.

Get one of these DVD or VHS for your school/university, your Engineering Society or Company meeting, or for your local community group. It is important for everyone to understand the Responsible Charge issue because their lives depend on it.

Order it through www.responsiblecharge.com/2005update.htm

Use your contacts in Academia to get this crucial information disseminated.

Louis Comunelli, P.E.

NEW AEA DIRECTOR

At the October 6, 2005 Board of Director's Meeting, Verghese D. Menachery, P.E. was unanimously elected as a new member of the Board. Verghese has been a member of AEA from our beginning, and

has been serving as the Chairman of our Membership Committee for several years. His vitality in updating our membership roles has been an inspiration to the Board of Directors.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of October 20, 2005 our account balances are as follows:

Checking Account	\$ 2,529.53
TELAF	750.00
CD	<u>5,625.00</u>
Total	\$8,904.53

- Brian Gill, P.E

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There are altogether 401 member on the rolls. Active members, who paid current dues as of 2005 are 134, out of which 37 are "Life Members". Every effort is being made to contact all the members and request them to bring their subscription up to date.

- Verghese D Menachery, P.E.

WRITERS

We can improve the quality of our newsletter with either regular or ad hoc articles from our members. News items, essays, opinions, etc. are welcome.

Anyone interested should call Lou Comunelli at 718-636-9237 or 718-782-0268 or E-Mail a message to comunellil@aol.com

LAPEL PINS / CLOTHING

Order your AEA Lapel Pins - \$8.00 ppd. Also available is a variety of clothing bearing the AEA Logo. Please use the Multi-Purpose Form to order merchandise.

AEA Contacts

Mail: American Engineering Alliance
Bowling Green Station
P.O. Box 1446
New York, NY 10274-1446
212-606-4053 (Voice Mail)
www.aeworld.org
Sal Galletta, P.E.,
Chairperson
E-mail: srgalletta@aol.com
Lou Comunelli, P.E.,
Secretary
718-636-9237 or
718-782-0268
E-mail: comunellil@aol.com

Phone:
Computer:
Persons:

Dave Berke, P.E.
Editor-In-Chief
E-mail: dberke4407@aol.com
Brian Gill, P.E.,
Treasurer
212-967-9833
Edgar Rafol
Member Services Director
718-388-1913

Merchandise