

The Engineering Voice

American Engineering Alliance

Winter - Spring 2003-2004

Chairperson's Report by Salvatore Galletta, P.E. - Chairperson

As you know, AEA is committed to promoting the Engineering Profession and the interests of Engineers everywhere. Your Board is constantly faced with the formidable task of addressing the myriad challenges that face our Profession. The issues we need to address are daunting indeed and the resources we can bring to bear are rather limited. Regardless of the difficulties, your Board is willing to address the issues and will not shy away from any problem that we deem needs our attention.

In my last report I discussed at length an issue that poses a great threat to our Profession, namely, the U.S. immigration policy and in particular abuses of the H1-B Visa. Since then, this issue along with the outsourcing of jobs, (i.e. sending American jobs overseas) has become a red hot political topic.

After many years of indifference by our government and the media, this matter is finally receiving the kind of attention and scrutiny that it deserves. Congress is finally debating the issue and various bills have been introduced. Both the Democratic presidential candidate, John Kerry, and President Bush, have stated their position on this issue.

We must thank our colleagues at IEEE and our colleagues at the American Engineering Association, for making H1B Visa and U.S. Immigration policy an important issue that can no longer be ignored by our political leaders. I urge all of you to become involved in this debate. Write or call your representatives and express your opinion on this issue. Only by the active involvement of all of us can we hope to influence the immigration policies of our government. If we don't get involved, government policies will be unduly influenced by special interest groups, whose agendas are to promote their narrow interests regardless of whether or not they are in the national interest. I urge you to use the following websites to stay informed on this vital issue and to communicate your opinions to your elected representatives:

www.zazona.com
www.techsunite.org
www.washtech.org

Since its inception, AEA has championed the cause of unified action by the Engineering Community in addressing the many challenges facing our Profession. We have been very active in coordinating our efforts with other Engineering Societies. We are an active member of the Metropolitan Engineering Societies Council (MESC) headquartered here in New York City which represents 23 Engineering Societies. I represent AEA on the Board of MESC. At every monthly meeting, I give the Board an update on AEA initiatives and coordinate our efforts with our colleagues on the MESC Board.

Every year MESC sponsors a major event at the New York Academy of Sciences to promote National Engineers Week. This year I assisted in publicizing this annual event. Thanks to

the cooperation of our colleague, Frank Lombardi, PE, who is the Chief Engineer at the Port Authority of NY and NJ, I was able to get an E-Week banner placed on the Airtrain overpass over the Belt Parkway leading to Kennedy Airport (see photos below). It didn't take much effort to accomplish this and it only cost \$200 for the banner. The E-Week banner is presently placed in a highly visible location, and is seen by thousands of motorists every day. This is one great way to publicize the Engineering Profession and the accomplishments of Engineers.

This incident made me aware of the tremendous potential that lies untapped for promoting the Engineering Profession. All across the nation there are thousands of bridges, overpasses and other structures where an Engineers Week banner could be placed. It only takes the initiative of some individual or local Engineering Society who contacts the owner of the structure or facility, e.g. State Department of Transportation, for permission to place a banner on the side of their structure. If this was done all across the nation, we could make great strides in educating the public on the critical role Engineers and Engineering play in their everyday lives. I encourage you to explore the possibilities of publicizing Engineers Week in your area.

As you are well aware, AEA advocates the active participation of Engineers in the political process. Your Board is actively pursuing this line of action. Last September, Lou Comunelli and I, met with a New York City councilmember to discuss several issues that we have been promoting. We had a long and productive discussion with the councilmember. We hope to get some legislation introduced in the City Council which will address the issues we raised, one of them being the "Proposal for the Management of the Infrastructure of the City of New York." We have been promoting this matter for over two years now and have mobilized our colleagues in the other Engineering Societies to get our Proposal adopted by the City of New York. We will continue to pursue this until we accomplish our goal.

Before I close, I would like to make you aware that on May 19, 2004, AEA will hold its Annual Meeting, Social and Awards Presentation at Bayard's in Lower Manhattan. Our keynote speaker will be Connie Crawford, PE of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Please join us in honoring our Award Recipient and in celebrating the achievements of our Profession.

Salvatore Galletta, P.E.

ADJUTANT'S CALL

On April 14, 2004 a Protest Demonstration against Outsourcing of American jobs was held outside of the New York Hilton Hotel. A coalition sponsoring the action is made up of Labor Unions and Professional Societies including AEA. Many of you

have not yet been affected by the increasing use of foreign technical labor to perform Engineering work but many have, especially in the Computer and Electric/Electronics specialties. Many of our colleagues have lost their jobs because employers have opted to save money on their myopically conceived "bottom line", by exploiting technical personnel in foreign countries.

I participated in the demonstration. Please contact me at comunellil@aol.com or telephone me at 718-782-0268 to let me know you will be willing to participate in similar public demonstrations. I need to have a list of members (and others) who I can contact on short notice, so please send me your information. We will be simply showing people that we Engineers exist, and that we have the capacity to feel strongly about issues that harm us and also compromise the Public Safety. We need only to show up and stand with our colleagues in a dignified manner to be of help to the effort.

Annual Meeting

On the evening of Wednesday, May 19, 2004 we will have an Annual Meeting of the Membership in lower Manhattan, in New York City. While the Meeting itself is free of charge, immediately afterward the AEA will host a ticketed Dinner and Awards Event for which reservations are necessary. We hope as many of you as possible choose to attend. More information on the night's program will be found in a flyer included with this newsletter.

NYCTSIA Continuing the March

The AEA is continuing to help guide our sister Professional Societies, through the New York City Technical Societies Infrastructure Advocacy, toward unified positions with other organizations with substantially more resources, and dialogue with political leaders who can help in our efforts to better serve the Public Interest.

- We have offered and provided information and support to local political leaders that have declared their intent to improve the New York City Infrastructure by ensuring that its management is performed in a professional manner. We will continue close liaison with such figures, while maintaining the non-partisan nature of our activities.
- We are working with the New York City Civil Service Technical Guild, which is the Labor Union that represents Engineer's, Architects and other Scientific and Technical City Employees. In addition to assisting us in our contacts with local political leaders, our dialogue with them concerning establishing Qualifications Based Selection criteria as the rule for procuring Professional Technical services, has been fruitful

"Utes" Needed

No, I don't mean recreational vehicles, it's just my New Yorkish way (ala My Cousin Vinny) of pronouncing "youths". The AEA has been able to launch the critical issues that are now adopted by the other Engineering Societies. We have been able to

affect the Professional movement with far more effect than our membership numbers would suggest.

This means that to truly capitalize on this position in the Technical Community for the benefit of the Public Interest and for practicing Engineers, we need to do a lot more work. Because of the following facts we desperately need young volunteers to help carry out the details of our mission, and for all of you to get us some new members:

- The original Board Members are not getting any younger.
- In our present position, other Societies are looking for even more specific leadership activities from us.
- We still have a small membership, so that our dues cannot support a paid staff.

This stage in our growth will define us for the near future. Call me if you can help us out. The more people that volunteer, the less each has to do.

Contact me at comunellil@aol.com or by telephone at 718-782-0268.

Lou Comunelli, P.E.

AEA Board Changes

During the past few months there were several changes in the composition of the Board of Directors. Because of other pressing responsibilities, three of our Board Members, Bob Collyer, Larry King and Vik Wagh decided they could not continue to devote as much time as they felt was necessary to fully participate in Board activities. Subsequently the remaining board members elected Brian Gill as a new Director. The composition of the new Board of Directors is:

Salvatore R. Galletta, P.E. – Chairperson
Ahmed Shakir, P.E. – Vice Chairperson
Louis R. Comunelli, P.E. – Secretary
Marc A Matalon – Treasurer
Brian Gill, P.E. – Director
Robert F. Waite, P.E. – Director

MEMBER NEWS

(If you have any news about yourself or any other member(s), please let us know by fax - 718-636-9237 or e-mail - comunellil@aol.com)

NEW MEMBER BENEFITS

AVIS Car Rental Discount - Avis offers low, competitive daily rates, and a special discount for our members. Car rentals may be made by calling 1-800-331-1212 or by visiting www.avis.com. When arranging for a car rental, simply give them our discount number (AWD # T761100). A special sticker and flyer are included with this issue for your convenience.

TRAVEL TIES Hotel/Airline/Cruise Discount - Special discounts for AEA members are available from Travel Ties by calling 1-888-528-4249 or by visiting www.travelties.com and

by giving them our PIN number (1260). They advise that during the summer, you will get through to them faster by using the telephone number.

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 718-782-0268 or E-Mail a message to comunellil@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

As of April 16, 2004 AEA has 388 members.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of April 9, 2004, our account balances are as follows:

General Account	\$388.83
Chapter Accounts	\$30.00
TELAF	\$715.00
Total	\$1133.83

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.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENTS

Discrete business card advertisements in our quarterly newsletters are available at a cost of \$50.00 per four issues. Any member interested in having his/her firm represented should call 718-636-9237.

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